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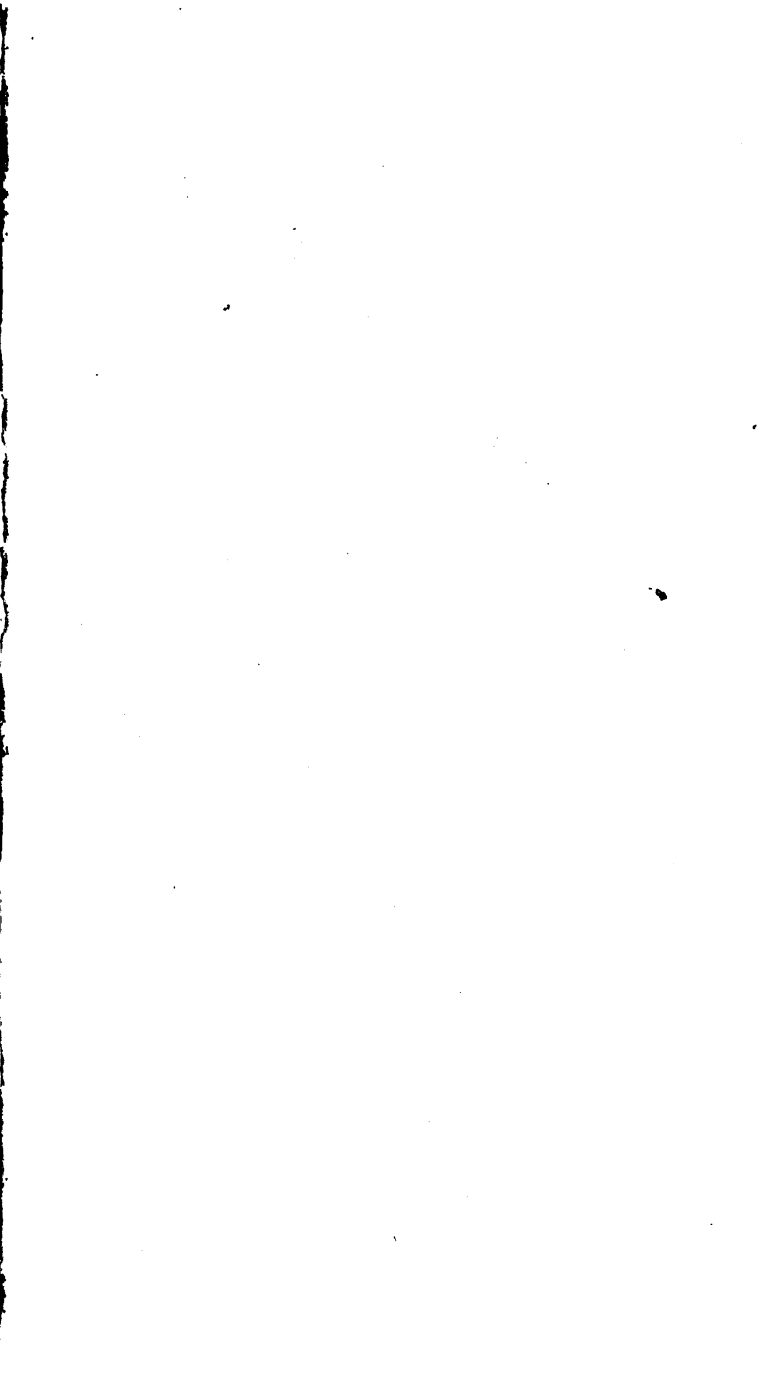
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THE IDLE MAN

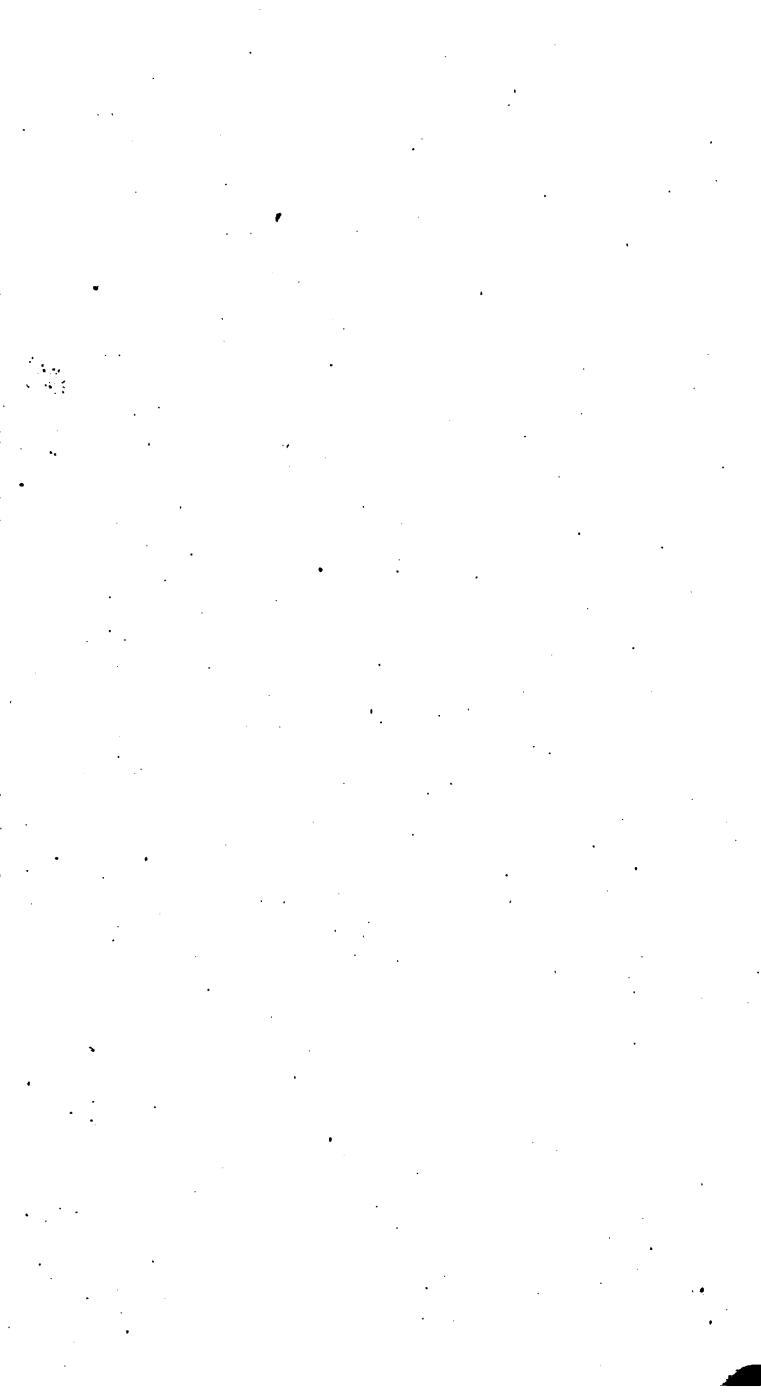
Richard Henry Dana

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THE

IDLE MAN.

No. I.—Vol. II.

Belmont
1822

How various his employments, whom the world
Calls idle, Copper.



NEW-YORK:

WILEY & HALSTED, No. 3, WALL-STREET.

1822.

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1821

Wiley

Southern District of New-York, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the eighteenth day of May, in the forty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States of America, WILEY & HALSTED, of the said district, have deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, to wit:

The Idle Man.

How various his employments, whom the world
Calls Idle.

Cowper.

In conformity to the act of the congress of the United States, entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;" and also to an act, entitled, "An act, supplementary to an act, entitled, an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

G. L. TOMPSON,
Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.

PAUL FELTON.

— From his intellect,
And from the stillness of abstracted thought
He asked repose.

And fears, and fancies, thick upon me came ;
Dim sadness, and blind thoughts I know not nor could name.

Who thinks, and feels
And recognises ever and anon
The breeze of Nature stirring in his soul,
Why need such man go desperately astray,
And nurse "the dreadful appetite of death?"
Wordsworth.

Do not torment me !

Pray, and beware the foul fiend.
Shakspeare.

PAUL FELTON was the son of a well educated country gentleman of moderate fortune, who, having lost his wife early in life, took upon himself the education of his son and daughter, from an unwillingness to be deprived of their society, and as a relief in his melancholy hours.

The retired life which the father led prevented the son's having many acquaintances, and checked those open, communicative feelings which make schoolboys so pleasing. The serious and reserved manners which the father

had fallen into, rather from his loss than any thing native in his disposition, made an early impression on the son; and from childhood Paul was retired, silent and thoughtful. His character was of a strong cast; and not being left to its free play amongst his equals, it worked with a violence increased by its pent up and secret action.

The people of the neighbourhood were illiterate and uncouth, for the most part having that rough and bold bearing which comes from an union of ignorance and independence. Paul's distant manner appeared to them like an assumption of superiority; and on all occasions which offered, they were careful to show their dislike of it. This not only increased his reserve, but gave to his mind a habit of looking on strangers--as in some sort enemies; and when passing any one who was not a familiar, he felt as if there were something like mutual hostility between them. With all this he had good affections; and when looking out from his solitude upon the easy and mingling cheerfulness of some, and the strong attachments which here and there bound others fast together, he saw how beautiful was that which was companionable and kind in the





heart of man, and his eye rested on it, and his soul longed after it.

So evil, however, is the nature of men, that almost the love of what is excellent may lead to sin if we do not take heed to the way in which we seek it; and we may see, and understand, and wish for it, till we come to envy it in another:— We may gaze upon a character that is fair and elevated and happy, till we feel its very goodness stirring in us dislike. Paul had no settled ill will towards any one; though, perhaps, there was mingled with his repining somewhat of envy at the happiness and ease of mind in others.

As he advanced in life his passions waxed stronger, and he craved an object about which they might live and grow. His retired habits, however, had left him without any of that careless confidence which helps along in so wonderful a manner men of the world; and with a perfect consciousness of his own powers, he was distrustful of his ability to make them known, and of the estimate which others would put upon them. This same uneasy distrust ran into all his feelings; and with a character to love earnestly and tenderly, the fear that his personal appearance and somewhat awkward manners

deprived him of the power of showing what his heart was susceptible of, made him almost miserable with the thought that such feelings were ever given to him. "When I am tired of solitude," he would say, "and my heart aches with the void I feel, shall all that I am conscious of within me as beautiful and true, be made scoff of by another, because I have not the fair form and manner of other men, and my tongue cannot so well tell what is within me? Shall all that is sincere in me be questioned or looked on with indifference?" So far had even his good affections become a torment to him, that all was at war and in opposition in his character. At one time he was busy in scornful speculation and doubt upon his passions,—and at another, he would urge them on, and give them rein that he might feel all the self torture they would bring. No one thing was left to its natural play—as making a part of his daily life—but existed in excess, or not at all. This change and opposition broke up that settled state in which the sense of truth puts us, and left him restless and disturbed, till at last his mind seemed given for little else, but to speculate upon his feelings,—part or unite them, quell them, or inflame them

nigh to madness. He who so far questions his own nature will question all things, and will bring the most pain and misery on those who are dearest to him because he is for ever asking for an assurance of returned affections, and seeking it in the power he feels himself to have over the object he loves. He inflicts his tortures and still doubts; and goes on to the end, working his own misery, and seeing the object of which he is most fond, perishing like himself.

Paul was nearly alone in the world. His father was for the most part lost in his own thoughts. His sister, though lively and talkative, had neither deep feeling, nor much strength of intellect. So much action and sound to little purpose wore on Paul's spirit, and though he was not without affection for her, a sneer would sometimes escape him in his impatience. He would shut himself up in his chamber, or wander off where no human being was to be met with, without so much as a dog for a companion.

He had now lived many years a self-tormentor, and without communion with any one to relieve his mind, when Esther Waring, the daughter of his father's friend, came on a visit to Paul's sister. Her disposition was cheerful and social,

and she had a thoughtful, active mind, which drew and fixed the attention of those she talked with. Her feelings were quick and kind, and the tenor of her thinking and remarks showed that they were deep. Her black hair fell round her dark, quiet eye, which seemed to rest on what the mind was showing it; and when she spoke, a light shone through it from the very recesses of the soul, as the stars shoot up from the depths of the waters, brightening what they shine through. Her form was beautifully moulded, and her movements gave it that pliability and delicacy which so touch and interest men of grave or melancholy natures.

Paul would often ramble among the hills, dwelling upon his own thoughts, and seeking for sympathy in nature; but she did not always answer him; and then it was that he stood like a withered thing amidst her fresh and living beauty. Sometimes he would sit alone on the top of one of the chains of these neighbouring hills, and look out on the country beneath him, as if imploring to be taken to a share of the joy which it seemed sensible to as it lay in the sunshine. He would call in the spirit to the birds that past over him, and to the stream that wound away till

lost in the common brightness of the day, to stay and comfort him. They heard him not, but left him to cares, and the waste of time, and his own thoughts.

It was after one of these melancholy days that he returned home about dusk, and not having heard of the arrival of a stranger, entered the parlour with a gloomy countenance, his eyes cast down, his full black eyebrows bent together, and his lips moving as if he were lost in talk with himself. Without observing that there was any one in the room, he walked directly to the window, and stood looking out on the evening sky. His powerful face and the characteristic movement of his body attracted the attention of Esther; and her eyes fixed on him unconsciously as he stood partly turned from her. He was below the common height, with a person square, muscular, and somewhat heavy; but he had the air and bearing of one of a deep, resolute and thoughtful mind—as being one of those men, whom, if a woman loves at all, she loves with the devotion of a martyr.

“Paul,” said his father.—“Sir,” answered Paul without turning his head.—“Here is my old friend’s daughter, Miss Waring.”—Little

used to society, and watchful lest others should mark his defects, his manner, when in company, was at all times somewhat embarrassed. He turned, and saw the fair face of Esther. It was slightly flushed, and the light which filled her eye and played over her countenance broke upon the gloomy face of Paul, and touched the sluggish spirit within him with a sensation of warmth and life. He made such apology for his inattention as his sudden introduction would allow of. His manner was constrained, and a little awkward. It was, however, the constraint of a certain sensitiveness which gives more interest and delight than that sort of acquired, conventional ease and grace so common in the world.

A country tea-table is a social affair ; and Paul lost for once a little of his taciturnity. The presence of an agreeable stranger is a great restorer of the spirits to those who are little in the world ; and the mixture of playful and serious in Esther's conversation, and the freshness which we feel coming from a new mind, kept Paul till a late hour in the parlour. His next day's walk was a little shortened, and the regular tread of his step as he paced his chamber was

not heard so long, and was often broken. It was evident that the settled gloom of the mind was from day to day breaking up, and that new thoughts and objects were coming in ; and that which had bound the soul like ice was melting and loosening and going off. He continued his walks more from habit than to relieve the intenseness of his thoughts, and his path lay less over the heath and sand than usual, and more amongst the grass, and trees, and flowers ; his sense of the beautiful was becoming more wakeful and softening the sternness of his nature.

The change went on so gradually and secretly, that it was a long time before he was conscious any was taking place. After breakfast he loitered in the parlour, and his evening passed quietly away in mild conversation with Esther. The beautiful blending of the thoughtful and gay in her manner and remarks played on him like sun and shade beneath a tree ; and tranquillizing and gentle emotions were stealing into him unawares.

Nor was it he alone whose heart was touched. Paul was not a man whom a woman could be long with and remain indifferent to. The strength of passion and intellect so distinctly marked in his features, in the movements of the

face, and in every gesture—the deep, but rich, mellow tone of his voice, with a certain mysterious seriousness over the whole, excited a restless curiosity to get more into his character;—and a woman, who is at the trouble of prying into the constitution of a man's heart and mind, is in great danger of falling in love with him for her pains. Esther did not make this reflection when she began; and so taken up was she in the pursuit, that she never once thought what it might end in, nor of turning back.

Paul was differently educated from the run of men; his father disliked the modern system, and so Paul's mind was no encyclopedia, nor book of general reference. He read not a great deal, but with great care; and his reading lay back amongst original thinkers, and those who were almost supernaturally versed in the mysteries of the heart of man. Their clear and direct manner of uttering their thoughts had given a distinctness to all his opinions, and a plain way of expressing them; and all he had to say savoured of reflection and individuality. He was a man precisely calculated to interest a woman of feeling and good sense, who had grown tired of the elegant and indefinite.

He never thought of the material world as formed on purpose to be put into a crucible ; nor did he analyse it and talk upon it, as if he knew quite as much about it as He who made it. To him it was a grand and beautiful mystery—in his better moments, a holy one. It was power, and intellect, and love, made visible, calling out all the sympathies of his being, and causing him to feel the living Presence throughout the whole. Material became intellectual beauty with him ; he was as a part of the great universe, and all he looked or thought on was in some way connected with his own mind and heart. The conversation of such a man (begin where it might) always tending homeward to the bosom, was not likely to pass from a woman like Esther without leaving some thoughts which would be dear to her, to mingle with her own, and raising emotions which she would love to cherish.

Two minds of a musing cast will have some valued feelings and sentiments, which will soon make an intergrowth and become bound together. Where this happens in reserved minds, it goes on so secretly, and spreads so widely before it is found out, that when at last

one thought or passion is touched by some little circumstance, or word, or look, a sympathizing feeling runs through the whole; and they who had not before known or intimated that they loved, find themselves in full and familiar union, with one heart and one being.

Esther's visit had now continued so long, that she was sensible it was proper for her to return home unless urged to remain; but it so happened that she never thought of going, without at the same time thinking of Paul, and with that came a procrastinating, lingering spirit. There was always something happening which was reason enough for her putting off the mention of the affair. She argued the matter, and said to herself, Paul did not cause the delay; but her heart beat quicker, and she felt that she was trying to deceive herself.—“I will know whether he cares for me,” said she. “There is something strangely inscrutable in him. I must, I will see into that scaled up heart.”—The hour came; but, in spite of her efforts, her voice was tremulous when she spoke of leaving the family. Paul was sitting opposite her at the table. His heart sunk at the words. He looked up, and his eyes met hers. The colour came to his cheek:

She blushed, and her eyes fell beneath his. Mr. Felton and his daughter protested against her going.—“I hope,” said Paul at last.—She looked up at him once more. He coloured deeper than before, and was silent. It stung him to the quick that any one should see the struggle of his feelings ; and he left the room.

As he traversed his chamber, his step grew quicker and quicker, and instead of gaining composure, his mind was more and more agitated. He became too impatient to bear it any longer, and was hurrying out to find relief in the open air, when he met Esther in the entry. Ashamed to let Paul see her emotion, she was passing him with her face turned from him.—“The show of concern,” said Paul, without calling her by name—Esther stopped—“the show of concern for us in some may seem impertinent, and offend us more than their indifference or dislike. If I was too obtrusive just now, let me hope for your forgiveness.”

“Mr. Felton officious ! And can he think me so frivolous or vain a girl as not to feel any token of regard from him a cause for self-esteem.”

“I did not humble myself to extort praise, Miss Waring ; it is enough if I have not offended.”

“Neither did I mean it as such,” replied Esther. “I was not so weak as to think your self-approval needed my good opinion to support it.”

“Do not misunderstand me,” replied Paul. “I spoke in true humility, and not in pride. Not to have offended you was all I dared look for.”

“Has it ever seemed to you that any of your many notices were other than grateful to me? If so, my manner but poorly expresses what I feel. Go where I may, Mr. Felton, I shall remember how much my mind owes you—how much the thoughts you have given it have done for my heart. And I hope it is not in my disposition to be thankless for any good I may receive.”

“Had I a claim,” answered Paul, “it is not your gratitude I’d ask for. The heart that longs for sympathy and finds it not, what else can touch it?—Forgive me, I know not what I say.—To be remembered in kindness by you, Esther, shall be a drop to comfort this thirsty soul.”

“And can a soul large as yours, and filled with all things to delight another’s mind, seem desolate to you?”

"Is it enough, think you, Esther, to be gazed upon? Or can the imagination satisfy the cravings here, at the heart?"

"The heart that does crave fellowship strongly, may surely find it, Paul, if we do not perversely, and for our self-torture, shut it up."

"Yes, but it is not every passer-by that I would go with. O, she must be one so excellent, so much above me! And yet I would not take her, did she come to me in mercy only. It drives me mad to think on't. For me there is no fellow.—Alone, alone, I must go alone through the wide and populous earth," he cried, leaving her suddenly.

As he went along, his eye past swiftly from one object to another, seeking something to rest upon, which might fix his hurrying and disordered thoughts. So fully had the notion possessed him that he was doomed to live without sympathy in the world, that the power was denied him to reveal to another what was in his heart, that his person, his manner, and all which made the outward man, barred him from any return of love, that the interest he discovered Esther to show in him, while it came like an unlooked for joy, brought with it doubt, humil-

iation and pain. He thought what he must seem to be to another, and then distrusted the plainness and steadiness of her nature.—“There is not enough within them,” said he, “for their minds to dwell upon; there must be something outward and near to entertain their thoughts; and their fickleness makes them careless how poor it is, so it will do for the time. She will go back to the world, and, amongst showy and accomplished men, will laugh secretly at herself, that such an one as I am ever quickened one beat of her heart.—Yet it may not be so; souls may hold communion hidden and mysterious as their nature. Can looks and movements and voice like hers, all blending in harmony, speak any thing but truth? Would that her heart lay open like a book to me, that I might read it and be satisfied!”

He had walked on through brake and over crumbling moss, and was climbing up the shadowy side of a steep hill, when, reaching its brow, the whole sweep of the western sky opened upon him in full splendor, and he seemed in an instant standing on the verge of a new world, a world of light and glory. As he looked forward, all that lay between him and it sunk

away, he felt himself expanding through the air, and becoming, as it were, one of the sons of light. But the spirit that lifted him up for a moment, passed like a bright cloud from him, a weight was on his soul heavier than the earth with all its hills, and reality breathed on him like the air of death. As he stood on the bare hill alone, and saw all beneath him making a fair society, the trees in brotherhood :—" Must I only," he cried, " of all the works of God, be an outcast ?"—He looked again upon the sky ; but the quiet clouds seemed to him to be telling of joy and peace to each other. His lip quivered as he leaned with folded arms, gazing on the setting sun. " The whole earth mourns thy going, thou gladdener of all things ; thy light is poured out over it ; thou touchest the trees and the grass and the rocks, and they each answer thee ; thou fillest the air, and sounds are heard in it as if coming forth from thy very light ; and all mingle in thee as in one common spirit of cheerfulness and love."—The sun was now gone. He set himself down upon a stone, till the visionary twilight and shadows were lost in the common darkness. There was the same vagueness of purpose in his mind as when he left home, yet

there was less tumult of the passions, and gentler feelings had entered him. As he turned to go homeward, the few stars that were coming out in the east cheered his spirit, hope gushed out in his heart like returning life, the affections were all in motion, and, for a while, the sense that he was in fellowship with his kind thrilled through him with rapture.

Esther was at the door when Paul returned.—
“What, alone?” asked he.

“Yes, you have all deserted me.”

“And can you feel deserted, Esther, who have the company of happy thoughts?”

“All thoughts that we cannot share, in time turn to sadness.”

“They do indeed, or to something worse than sadness—to discontent—almost to hate sometimes.”

“That is a fearful sin, in the solitude of our souls to grow in evil.”

“It makes us mad almost,” said he, his eyes shooting a wild light on her. His look and voice made her tremble.—“Paul, Paul,” said she vehemently, “what ails ye? Can a heart like yours find no sympathy in all this world? Is there no one being to share in all its goodness with you, and give it ease?”

“And with whom shall it find rest,” he asked, looking earnestly at her.—Her eagerness had carried her too far; she blushed deeply, and stood silent before him.—The struggle with himself was a severe one; he had never laid open one deep feeling, and how could he make known that of love? At last he said, after a pause, “though of form and manners unwinning, and reserved, and seemingly cold and hard, I have at times been foolish enough to think that there was one being who could read something of my soul, and love me for what she found there. Tell me, Esther, was I mistaken, did I presume too far?”

“And do you ask me so doubtingly,” said she, much moved, but looking up frankly at him, “to reprove me for speaking as I did in the warmth of my feelings? You cannot think,” she added, somewhat cast down, “that it was an artifice in me to hasten you to this. I did not consider that it was a freedom which ill suited me, and it came from an earnest heart, Paul.”

“My words were not those of reproof. O, Esther, it was said in the lowliness of a soul, which, though too often restless and proud, is at times humble as a worm. It is a trial of my

faith in you to believe that you could ever love me with all your heart; the world could hardly have persuaded me once, that a creature like you, made almost to be worshipped of men, could ever look in fondness on one like me.”—He paused for a moment; then his manner changed suddenly. “But, but,” he cried, hurried and vehemently, “so much as I doubt my powers to touch another’s heart, so much the more, so much the more must I have assurance of her love.”

“Why so wild, Paul? What pledge can I give you, that I would not?”

“Ay, ay, but the pledge must not only be a sure one,” said he, his manner growing still more vehement,—“it must be of a love which shall make me all in all. Can you,” he cried, seizing her hand and wringing it hard, “have me in all your thoughts—make your whole soul mine?”—She shook, and turned pale. She struggled to pass it off lightly; but a tear was in her eye, as she said, with a forced smile—“Why, Paul, you are beside yourself! Any body might think I was making myself over to the Evil One, and not to the man that loves me.”

“Forgive me, forgive me, Esther,” he murmured in a choaked voice, throwing his arms round her neck and resting his hot brow on her shoulder,—“I—I feel myself sometimes too poor a thing for mortal regard; and then, and then I could crawl into the earth. O, take me to you, and cherish me, and tell me that I am not wholly worthless—that you will love me.”

“Paul, Paul,” said she, scarce articulately, “this is madness. You have brooded all alone over your melancholy thoughts, till they have bewildered you. If you care for me, shall I not make you happy? Look up, and let a cheerful spirit enter you.”—He lifted his head slowly from her shoulder, and stood gazing on her beautiful, tremulous countenance.—“O, you are an angel come in mercy to me. My spirit will never suffer so more.”

“This is too eager, Paul,” said she, kindly. “Let your soul have rest, and try to be of a calmer mind.”—And he was quiet. The heave and tossing of the feelings settled away, and he stood with thoughts as gentle as the moonlight which poured over them, as it came up in the east;—for what spirit will not a woman’s kindness calm?

At last Esther's father came to take her home. Paul was urged to join them; but a certain delicacy prevented his going for the first time to the house in company with the woman to whom he had been but a little while engaged; and so, with an embarrassed and half uttered apology, he said he should soon follow them.

He had time for only a word or two at her leaving him; and yet he looked and spoke as if it would take ages to pour out what was in his soul. All the good affections in our nature seemed at work there—it was love, and pity, and parental care, and the heart-sickness of parting. As he put his arm gently round her, and looked in her face, there was in his manner more of the father, who is about parting with an only daughter for the first time, than of the lover. His voice was low, and thrilling, and admonitory.—“You are going from me, Esther, for the first time since we met. A single and near object moves our affections strangely. In a little while you will be amongst those with whom you grew up; and old sympathies of thought and feeling may return to you. Look carefully into your heart, Esther, and think it your best faith to me, to abide by what that tells you.”

“And can you regard and love me, Paul,” she said, turning her eyes upward to his with a prayerful look, “and judge me of so light and changeable a heart?”

“No, Esther, but the very intenseness of love calls up misgivings; and better I were left out on the bleak heath yonder, than be gathered to your bosom, to be thrown away again.”

They parted; and though Esther loved him with a devoted spirit, she breathed more freely when out of his presence. He was dearer to her for his melancholy; and his kind and fond manner, when his abstraction of mind was gone, touched her heart. Yet there was something fearful and ominous to her in his gloom; and though she knew it had been caused by long solitude, and a mistaken estimate of the relation in which he might stand to others, still it was mysteriously foreboding to her, and there was an indistinct impression on the mind that some dreadful event, connected with it, awaited her.

He followed with his eyes the daintily moving steeds and gay chariot, till a turn in the road shut them out from his sight.—“They belong to what we call the elegancies of life,” said he to himself. “There is much going under that

term which serves to break up the thoughtfulness of the mind, and what is native and sincere in the heart."—He turned away, not only melancholy, but dissatisfied and doubting. And now that he was alone again, and without the kind persuasions of Esther, his old depression and gloom were returning, and with them all the torture that doubting minds undergo in love. Sometimes he saw her before him with the distinctness almost of real presence; her voice and countenance beautifully touched with her fondness for him; and then again he remembered her cheerful, social spirit, and he was driven from her thoughts by those who were strangers to him. And a thousand times a day he would ask himself, "is she thinking of me now, or is she busy amidst the millions of things which waste our time and draw to them our wishes and hopes, yet have nothing abiding in them like the nature of our souls?"

These conjectures and sad reflections were now to give way to feelings immediate, active and intense; for Paul set off from home and soon reached Mr. Waring's.

Unless a man has met, after a long or distant separation, the woman who loves him with all her

heart, he never saw the soul shine out in the countenance in all its glow and beauty. So thought Paul when they met. And as Esther looked on him, his face, too, was changed like the edge of a cloud by the shining of the sun upon it: And she felt that no joy is like her joy who reads such silent tokens of love returned, heart answering to heart, and thanks for the deep gladness she has given.

The house of Esther's father, whither Paul had come, was situated but a few miles from the city, in a pleasant village, made up chiefly of people of wealth and fashion. Though Mr. Waring's fortune was not as large as many of his neighbours', as he had no child but Esther he was able to gratify his fondness for company and gay life, and had made them agreeable to her from early habit. She loved society the better, also, because she made it pleasant, and not for the reason that those do who are as dull company to others as to themselves.

The consequence of all this was, that Paul and she had fewer hours together, than when at his father's. He was shy of being near her in company, and to talk with the woman to whom he was known to be engaged, before strangers,

would have been martyrdom to him. He found that her countenance brightened and spirits rose high in society. Her gay laugh and cheerful voice was like the hissing of an adder in his ear. He was pained and made uneasy, because he saw her taken up with that in which he felt himself unfitted to hold a part. She was giving delight and receiving it in return, and he could not share in it. He would stand aside and watch her, till he fancied that her look and tone of voice were the same with which she looked on and talked with him.

His mind was in a peculiar degree single. Whatever passion or thought was in him, it filled him entirely; and now that it was love, all in the world that held not connexion with that was as nothing to him; he neither heard, nor saw, nor felt any thing that concerned not his love for Esther. The alacrity with which she entered into whatever was going on, was to him a want of steadiness of mind and depth of feeling. He understood nothing of those to whom the passion of love gives a gay spirit—a feeling of kindness and fellowship towards all the world—from whom, as it grows fuller and more intense, it sends forth something of its

bright influences over all things :—In him it was a self-absorbing and lonely fire, flaring only through the recesses of his own soul, and shining alone upon his own solitary thoughts.

“And has God given them another constitution of mind also?” said he to himself one night, as he left the room, too restless to stay any longer. “Have they no fastnesses nor places of rest to come home to? Day and night are they on the wing and never tire. The bird that passed over me just now, and called to me out of the darkness, though he make himself companion of the stars the night long, will go to his nest by morning.—I would not be a thing to lay my heart open to the common eye. Its beatings warm me the more, to think that I can be in the midst of men, and they not count its pulses. Rather than lie out forever sunning in the day, I would be covered up in my grave.”—Paul could not accuse Esther to himself, without a feeling of compunction. This did not drive away his doubts, but made him turn some of the impatience he felt, upon her. Yet in the midst of it, the truth of her character would appear to him in all its fair simplicity, and his adoring spirit would look up to her as something set apart and sacred.

Her spirits were in full flow when Paul left the room ; for it gave animation and cheerfulness to her in all she did, when she thought he saw her. The conversation began to flag ; she turned to look for him, but he was gone. She remembered that a feeling like depression had been gradually gaining on her, and a superstitious thought crossed her, that she had been mysteriously conscious of missing something, she knew not what, though she did not before perceive he had gone. She grew silent, the company withdrew, the family retired to rest, and she was left alone.

It was midnight, and Paul had not returned. There was no sound in the house. She raised the window and looked out. It was a black, misty night, and there was that intense stillness abroad, which, at such a time, is felt by us as a supernatural presence, and makes us think of death. She scarcely breathed as she listened for his footstep, and the beatings of her heart struck upon her ear like a distant bell. At last she heard him as he came round the house, and the blood bounded through her frame.—“ Paul ! ” she cried, and her silver voice rang in the still air. Paul entered,—“ Where have you been, you

runaway," said she, springing lightly towards him,—“to give me the heartach for two long hours,—and all in the chilly night fog, too. See,” said she, running her fingers playfully through his coarse, glossy, black hair, on which the dampness stood in drops—“these pearls shall all be mine, and make me a happy girl again.”

“They will not be the first that have eased a woman’s heart, Esther. Come, come, these are no brown curls to ring the white fingers of a fair hand.”

“I thought to cheer you,” said she, drawing back, “I am sorry it offends you.”

“Did I speak harshly, Esther? If I did, it was far from what I feel.”

“Not harshly, but mournfully, and as if I had given you cause; and to think so is harder to bear, than what comes from an over hasty temper.”

“I am glad to hear you say so, for that is one of the many tokens whereby we find out love.”

“And are you in search of mine still? I had thought it had been yours long ago.”

“And I think so too, Esther; but then it can rest only on our belief, and upon that there will always be hanging some ugly shred of doubt.”

“O! I had thought it was a faith,” said she, “not to speak profanely—a faith that surpasseth knowledge, that it was in us as our consciousness, our very life. Is it folly in me to think so?”

“No, Esther, it is your virtue. Bad as I am, I have moments of much blessedness—and this, this is one of them;—it is on me now,” he cried in a broken laugh. She started from him as from a deranged man.—“Be not alarmed,” said he, seizing her arm, and looking on her eagerly, but with a melancholy smile, “I am not mad, not quite mad, though joy shoots through me sometimes like fire.”

“I wish it might burn in you gently and constantly, Paul, for then I should see you a happy man; and I would die to night and give over all my love for you—if love must die with us—could I but leave you happy.” She covered her face, and sobbed as if all comfort had forsaken her.

“O, Esther, I am not worthy this; I’m so poor a thing I ought not to make you unhappy even.—That was an evil time in which you saw me first. When I was alone, I went about the earth as a doomed thing; and now that I am connected with my kind, the curse that

was on me singly, seems to be stretching out over all in communion with me. When I see you happy, my heart aches for you, to think how heedless you are of the hour that is waiting you."

"And what hour have I to fear, Paul, but the hour of death which is to part us?"

"I cannot tell; only I have lived impressed from the time I was a boy, that it was writ I should be miserable. And when I see you happy, you look to me like a star trailing your glory across my gloom only to fall and go out in it. Better, I fear, that I should have lived on in darkness, than that your light should ever have shone on me. O, I talk! No more of this now. The morning will overtake us. You look pale and heart-sunken. Let me not make your hour of rest miserable, Esther. Think this, as I hope it is, but the boding of midnight. To-morrow I'll be as cheerful as the lightest of them. Sweet sleep comfort you. And now, my love, good night."—Esther looked at him, melancholy, yet something cheered, but she could not speak as they parted.

For several days, Paul's affectionate manner was not broken by any sudden starts or gloomy reserve; and if after a time these returned upon

him, it was seldomer ; and his disposition seemed softened and quieted. The day was coming that Esther was to be his wife ; and as it drew near, he felt more surely how deeply rooted she was in his heart.

There is a tenderness and delicacy about a serious man, at times, the beauty of which affects us even more than when we see them in a woman. This is partly from the contrast. They are in agreement with a woman's person and general character, and are habitual to her. And it may be that when the man is under their influences, he has a more exquisite sense of them—may we say a finer touch for them ?

Though Paul always showed the greatest fondness for Esther, except at moments when hunted by some fearful passion or thought, there was now such a kind regard, such a delicate propriety of the affections in his manner towards her, that she almost thought some new and higher sense of his love had been given her—it moved her to tears. Paul was happy that it did ; it made her the nearer to him. He knew that the tender affections have more or less of melancholy in them, and that all his own were tinged by it.—“ Let me fasten on these bracelets,” said

he, taking out a pair he had just purchased, "for there is a charm in their circles to bind you to me."

"Nay, nay, Paul, no manacles, though to bind me to you even," she said, unclasping one of them and whirling it round her finger.—"Don't look so serious about it," she added, holding her wrist up to him. "There, clasp it again, and you shall be the first to take it off, though thou wouldst have me spell-bound, thou wizard man. I wish it had been something else, though."

"And what would you have had it, Esther?"

"This," said she, passing her hand playfully over his face.

"What, a face like mine, and 'in little,' and set round with gold and diamonds! And where would you have worn it? Why, it would have made your heart beat with fear to have such a looking thing so near it. And to have made love to it, Esther," he said, half smiling, "that's past all faith."

"Then there is no truth in my love, Paul."

"Yes, but there is," he answered rapidly, "it's all truth. And yet," he added half to himself, and as if pondering upon it, "'tis very strange."

"What is strange?"

“That Esther should ever look on me, and after, love me. And yet you will vow it to-morrow, will you not?”

“If you question it so, it may be better for us both that I should not. For when I have done it, should Paul doubt, he had better be in his grave than live.”

“Nor should I deserve to see the light, nor feel this blessed sun upon me. I was moody, Esther. Do not lay to heart what I say at such times. My joy was too much for me, and made me play with misery. Did'st never in grief have a wild and horrid mirth fork by you like lightning? I have, that my eyes have been blenched at it. I shall be used to this joy soon, and then my spirit will be as quiet before you as that cloud which rests above us in the light. O, you shall be my sun and all else that is good and cheering to me; and when I hold you to me so, to-morrow, I'll not call you Esther, but my wife.”

The next day they were married, and Paul took Esther to their new home, not quite a mile from the village. The building was plain and well proportioned; set down in the middle of a level grass plat, which was broken only by the

gravel way winding up to the door, and a clump of young trees a little on one side. The whole was open to the sun ; and about it was an air of perfect simplicity and quiet. All along the even road to the village lay a beautiful prospect ; and there was a row of elms and sycamores, stretching the whole length of the route. So that, though they had but one near neighbour, Mr. Ridgley, they had quite as much company as if in the midst of the village.

Their house terminated these pleasant views ; for a little back of it ran a ridge of steep rocks ; and beyond that the country was desolate, stretching out into wide sand tracts, broken by patches of scant, short, yellowish grass, and half round the whole, swept a forest of low, ragged pines. The place was difficult of access, and appeared to be a land accursed ; neither the foot-print of man nor beast was to be seen there. It was one of those good for nothing tracts of country, which are sure to lead their proprietors into law suits. A farmer in the neighbourhood had put a couple of men on it to cut down the wood ; and this business he carried on for many years, till falling into a dispute with a neighbouring farmer, notice of the trespass reached the

owner, who would not have remembered that the estate was his, had it not been for his tax-bills. A suit was instituted, the farmer at last driven off from what was not worth having, and the true proprietor ruined. A story was current thereabouts that the land was good enough before the owner gained his cause; but that he was a hard man, and that the Devil had a hand in the suit, helped him gain it, and then danced over the land where the sand was now seen, and singed the grass as he went off in fire and smoke. The men said they did not know why they should go where there was nothing to be got; and a foolhardy boy who had once been a birds-nesting there, was ever afterwards looked on with suspicion, as, in some way or other, belonging to the Evil One.

When Paul now looked back, and remembered that till a little while before the world had been bare of joy to him; that the soul, living without sympathy, had been a prey to itself, and that a solitude, more dreadful than if he had stood the only living thing upon the earth, had surrounded him—the solitude and void which estrangement from others makes about us,—it was as if he had past into another state of being; and a new

nature and new delights filled him with sensations of which before he had no thought. He looked upon Esther and his mind was one rapture. Neglected and passed by, as he had been, she had stopped and spoken comfort to him and taken him by the hand, and he followed her like a child. "Thou hast been my good angel to me, Esther, and brought me out of the darkness into the comfortable light. The spring of my feelings was sealed up, but you have opened it, and they run on now taking the hues and forms of all the beautiful and blessed things with which God has filled this earth for us. My heart is fuller of joy than I well know how to bear—it aches to speak it to you ; and yet its throbbings can tell you better than words can."

This was the over contentment of a mind by nature melancholy and not knowing how to measure its joys when they came. The happiness of such minds is always in excess ; then it seems strange to them ; they question its truth ; it does not belong to them ; they fear it cannot last. They look back upon their misery as their true condition, as one which they are bound to by some fatality ; and in their hopelessness they rush into it further than before.

Paul's state was so opposite to what he had been wonted to, that it seemed to produce some indistinctness of the thoughts and senses, and he could hardly have a clear persuasion of the reality of his happiness. It partook of the visionary ; and he began to fear that his hopes and imagination had cheated him into it. In his saner moments, when he could not question its truth, he doubted its stability ; and a vague notion that this was to pass away, and something, he knew not what, to take its place, unsettled the rest of his mind and disturbed its full content. A feeling, like those ill-forebodings which sometimes come over us and then go off again, was gaining possession of him, bringing back his old melancholy, troubling his reason, and distorting all he saw.

There is a strange infatuation in gloomy minds which makes all that they are concerned in minister to their melancholy, and they seek out causes of depression with an industry more eager and unrelaxed than that with which cheerful souls hunt after pleasure. It is the craving of a diseased appetite, which is never sated.

Paul found his melancholy returning at intervals. At first he shrunk from it with the horror

that the lunatic would fly from his fits of coming madness ; but at last, as dark thoughts began to gather round him, he no longer tried to scatter them ; the fate that he imagined himself born to was oftener in his mind, and his former distrust of himself ; and with this came his doubts of others.—“ It cannot be,” he said to himself, “ that I was made to be loved of one so beautiful and of so light a heart. The gloom that shadowed me about was a mystery to her, and she was curious to know it. She saw that I was depressed and miserable, and that moved her heart to pity me ; she found that her kindness touched me and made me happy, and this stirred an innocent pride within her, and she mistook it all for love. And, fool ! fool ! so did I. Ay, and there was no one near to place this uncomely form by ; and no gay, accomplished and ready mind, to play round the sluggish, unchanging movements of mine. Poor girl, she knew not me, nor herself then ; but the knowledge will one day be revealed to her, and with a curse as heavy as fell on man in paradise.”

Though Paul passed many such hours when alone, and was restless and impatient in company, yet the thought that Esther was his wife

was still a healing to his heart. He loved her with all that intenseness his nature was made to feel; and it was with a kind of joyous adoration that he looked on her in his undisturbed moments. He yet could feel the reality of her fondness for him; and he thought of it as more than an earthly blessing.

It was about this time that Frank Ridgley returned home after an absence of two years. He had been an early and ardent lover of Esther's. She had a great regard and liking for Frank, but not a particle of love for him. His case was a more hopeless one than if he had been her aversion; for opposite passions run so into each other, particularly in women, that it is oftentimes hard to tell which is which. Perhaps Frank felt the truth of this (though he was not much in the way of philosophizing) when Esther refused him, telling him at the same time that she had a great esteem for him. For the matter of that, thought Frank, though he dared not say it, you might profess as much to my grandmother. He was angry, and mortified, and in despair; and confounded, and not knowing what feeling he was suffering under, swore most solemnly that he would never survive his disappointment.—“That's an unwise

resolution in you, Frank," said Esther. "Only allow yourself time to think about it till you are a little older, and you'll live to see the folly of it. —Forgive me, Frank; I do not mean to make sport of your feelings; but, for the life of me, I can't help thinking how bright and well you will look a twelvemonth hence."

The truth was, Frank was one of those whose feelings spend themselves on the outer man, and whose passions, violently as they seem moved, are but healthful excitement, compared with what those feel who look clayey and hard when they are agitated most. Esther knew very well that he was sincerely and warmly attached to her at the time, and that, would she consent to have him, he would make a fond husband, and wear black for her a full year after she was gone; but that his mind was not one of those abiding places in which we find decayed, gray trees, and young shoots, running vines, and mosses, and all those close and binding growths which look so lasting, faithful and affectionate. She pitied him as we do one who has a twinge of the toothach—which nobody dies of. However bent we may be upon dying of crossed love, it is no easy matter; next to starving one's self

to death, there is nothing which requires more resolution and perseverance. Accordingly, Frank returned in due time, glad to see his friends, with his head full of novelties, with much useful information, and a ready, lively way of showing it.

It was a damp, uncomfortable evening; and Paul and Esther were round the fire. Paul was sitting a little on one side, in the shade, now and then making some short, serious remark, after his usual manner, with his eyes resting on Esther's countenance, as she sat looking into the fire, pondering on what he said, and the many things it led the mind to. Her face appeared all thought, and her features had a beautiful distinctness, as their deep, silent shadows fell in strong outline against the warm fire-light that shone on her. At no time had love seemed to him so quiet and domestic. He thought that he had never before been conscious how lovely and dear to us humanity may be.

There was a smart rap at the door, and in came in full spirits Frank Ridgley. Esther, who was surprised and sincerely glad to see him, showed it in her benevolent countenance. His manner was a little embarrassed; for he had not

forgotten that he had once been in love, though now cured of it ; and remembering Esther's prophecy, he coloured and looked a little ashamed to think that she should see him alive and well again. Paul felt something like uneasiness at the expression of Esther's face, and an impatient doubt passed through his mind as he observed Frank's embarrassed manner. It was that old distrust of himself, and of his power to interest another deeply, making him question the possibility of a sincere and enduring passion for him, and not a proneness to think lightly of others' virtue, which haunted him. Frank was a man much below Paul in force of character, and feeling, and intellectual power ; yet he was his very opposite in mind and person ; and this left Paul room to harass himself with surmises, and torture himself with the agony with which humbling thoughts afflict proud men.

" Mr. Felton," said Esther, a little agitated at introducing Paul, " this is an old acquaintance of mine, Mr. Ridgley." His eye fastened on Esther, as if he was reading her very soul. He saw her agitation, but mistook the cause. He rose slowly from his chair, out of the dark corner in which he was sitting, and giving his hand deliberately

to Frank, and looking downward, said gravely, "Sir, I am happy to see you."—As the light struck upon his figure, and he took Frank's hand, Frank shrunk back a little, as if not altogether safe. The deep, and scarcely audible voice in which he spoke, his dark countenance, his low, muscular form on which Frank looked down, all seemed possessed of some strange power. Frank involuntarily turned towards Esther, as if in wonder that any thing belonging to such a being could be so gentle, and fair, and cheerful. Esther trembled as she observed Paul, though she hardly knew why; and seeing Frank looking at her, blushed deeply, for she knew what was passing in his mind. Paul glanced his eye swiftly on both of them, and bowing low, drew back into his seat.

The room was lighted, and Frank, who was of too cheerful a disposition to be made long uneasy by unpleasant thoughts, began in full spirits to talk about old times and all he had seen since leaving home. His gayety was not of that sort which we sit and look at with a good natured acquiescence, and are pleased to see so well played off; but it was communicative, driving away our troubles, and

making us feel for the time as-if we ourselves were of too happy a temperament ever to be melancholy. He was a man of good sense, too, and of right honest and kind feelings, and therefore much better fitted for the true purposes of travel than those who go equipped with every thing that can be thought of except straight heads and good hearts. His gayety and humour were mingled with just observations, and softened down by the propriety and delicacy natural to his character; and these, with a graceful and elegant person and handsome countenance, and a certain deference of manner, made him a favourite wherever he went, particularly amongst the women.

Notwithstanding the effect Paul's appearance had on him, he knew Esther too well to think that any attention he might pay her would reconcile her to a neglect of her husband. This might be one of her singularities; but it was not to be disregarded. Besides, however reserved and silent Paul might be, no one could sit near him and forget who was by his side. Though Paul was distant and cold at first, the ease and propriety of Frank's remarks were not unobserved by him, and he was gradually led to

re a part in the conversation ; and when he did, Frank no longer wondered at his power over her ; though at the same time, (he knew not why,) he was conscious of something like uneasiness and distrust on her account. On the whole, the evening passed off very well, and Esther's heart was lightened to think it had ended so much better than it began.

When Frank withdrew, Paul became silent.—

"It is not yet quite two years since she first saw me," said he to himself ; "and who can tell how

many times since she was a child, to that hour, she has sighed as she thought on some other man?"—He stirred in his chair. Esther looked

at him, but he seemed buried in thought.—"And

is it mere chance that has fixed her love at last on me? And have the same hopes and same

aspirations which rest on me, been breathed forth in

confidence for another when I was unknown? And

had she never seen me, might she not have

loved as fondly on some other man, and hung

on him as she will on me now?"—It was hateful

to him to think on it. There is no man of

sentiment who would not gladly be rid of such

thoughts if he could ; he practises upon himself

to believe it was otherwise ; and though half

conscious of the self-deception, gathers some relief even from that. But Paul was made for self-torture ; beside, he had so long lived a lonely man, that what he felt, was not so to be shuffled off. He considered with himself, and considered truly, that there is not one woman in a thousand, who has not, at some time or other, imagined herself in love with another man than him she at last marries. It made him writhe with impatience.

At last Esther said aloud, but without raising her eyes from a print on which she was looking, " he is certainly very amiable."

" Do you mean that swine-feeder ?" asked Paul sarcastically, as he looked up.

" I was not then thinking of him or his pigs," she replied, smiling.

" You should be more definite then, my dear. You forget that every one's thoughts do not take the same road with yours. Yes, he is one of the handsomest men I've met with, and of a very winning address."

" Handsome, did I say ?" asked Esther.

" I know not that you did ; yet you think him so, surely, do you not ?"

“Certainly I do; but I was speaking of his heart.”

“O, of his heart. Of that you know more than I do.”

“And well I may, Paul, for I have known Frank Ridgley from a boy.”

“Very like,” said Paul—then spoke of the weather, and soon left the room. He at this time believed Esther of a mind as open as the day; yet because his own person and bearing had nothing graceful or attractive in it, he made these properties of too much importance, forgetting how much less women regard such things in us than we do in them. He remembered Frank’s appearance, and the idea took possession of him, that there must have been a time when he had place in her youthful imagination. This was a poisonous thought to take root in a mind like Paul’s.

The next day, as Paul was returning home from a morning’s walk, he saw at a distance, Frank leaving the house.—“I thought as much,—a lady’s man, who plays his glove, and shows a white hand. We value ourselves and are valued on the turn of a finger nail; and what is worse, our sober, retired thoughts are put

out o'doors, and our minds fitted up for shows and gala-days."

Frank soon came along, looking fresh as the morning, and wished Paul, gayly, a pleasant day, as he passed by. Paul bowed his head slowly, and walked on homeward.

"And what have you there?" asked Esther, going towards him as he entered the room.

"Constancy, Esther, constancy."

"Give it me then," said she, catching it out of his hand. "Yet I'll not take it all. There, it shall be between us. Stay, let me have it again, and I'll plant it under this window that it may grow all together. And I'll water it daily."

"Look well to it, lest a blight take it."

"It is not so tender that it need watching so, surely."

"Yes, but it is, Esther—it is often blasted."

"I read not so of it."

"Then your books are a lie; do not trust them."

"I will not, nor myself neither. 'Tis yours again, and you shall tend it. I am too heedless and gay for such continual care. Come, lay by that sombre countenance, and fit you with a

more cheerful look, for we are to have a splendid ball at the village. Frank has been here and spoiled my morning, with talk of figures and dresses. And I know not but that you would have found me in full practice, had I not protested against dancing at high noon.—Now, take me not in earnest, Paul.”

“Would that I could tell when I might, Esther. My heart is ill at ease, and I cannot trifle now.”

“And is it I, who have broken its peace?” asked she, as she leaned fondly on him. “It was my hope, and all which made me happy, that I should be its place of rest and joy. I seem to you too much a trifler for your graver nature. I, too, was graver than now before I knew you, Paul. It is the overjoy that you have filled my heart with, which makes me so prattling and wild, like a child. ’Tis that I feel almost too much, and not too little. Yet sometimes it makes me thoughtful, nearly to melancholy, instead of gay. I wish it always did, for then I should be like you, and content you better. And you would never then cast on me that look of sorrow and reproof which you did just now, would you, Paul?” she asked, looking up at him,

with a smile, as she rested on him, the tears starting to her eyes.

"Be like me, Esther! You little know what you're wishing for. Be like yourself," said he, laying his hand on her open brow, "be good and be happy. Misery is but another name for sin,—for imperfect virtue. Could we cast off our frailties, man might walk through the afflictions, the losses, and wrongs of life with the calm of heaven within him, and its glory round about him. I've had visions of it, and they have changed this vile thing you lean on, to the bright soul and shape of angels."

She gazed on him without breathing. His face was turned upward, and he seemed as if seeing into the world above him. His look was fixed and calm as the sky. He stood for a time as if rapt in holy converse. By and by a cloud passed, his countenance became dark as night, and his head sunk on his bosom. Esther could look no longer. Paul seemed sinking beneath her weight. She raised herself, and he turned, and walked slowly out of the room. She would have followed him, but she could not move.

He took a path which led through the fields back of his house, and wound amongst the steep

cks part way up the range of high hills, till it reached a small locust grove, where it ended. e began climbing a ridge near him, and reaching the top of it, beheld all around him a scene desolate and broken as the ocean. For miles seemed as if one immense gray rock had been waved up and shattered by an earthquake. ere and there might be seen shooting out of e clefts, old trees, like masts at sea. It was as the ocean in a storm, had become suddenly ed, with all its ships upon it. The sun shone aring and hot on it, but there was neither ie, nor motion, nor sound ;—the spirit of Deso- tion had gone over it, and it had become the ace of death. His heart sunk within him, and something like a superstitious dread entered m. He tried to rouse himself and look about ith a composed mind. It was all in vain -he felt as if some dreadful, unseen power stood ear him. He would have spoken, but he dared ot in such a place.

To shake this off, he began clambering ver one ridge after another, till passing autiously round a beetling rock, a sharp cry om out it shot through him. Every small it and precipice sent it back with a satanic

taunt, and the crowd of hollows and points seemed for an instant alive with thousands of fiends. Paul's blood ran cold; and he scarcely breathed as he waited for their cry again; but all was still. Though his mind was of a superstitious cast, he had courage and fortitude; and ashamed of his weakness, he reached forward, and stooping down looked into the cavity. He started as his eye fell on the object within it. "Who and what are you?" cried he. "Come out and let me see whether you are man or devil." And out crawled a miserable boy, that seemed shrunk up with fear and famine. "Speak, and tell me who you are, and what you do here," said Paul. The poor fellow's jaws moved and quivered, but he did not utter a sound. His spare frame shook, and his knees knocked against each other, as in an ague fit. Paul looked at him for a moment. His loose, shambly frame was nearly bare to the bones, his light sunburnt hair hung long and straight round his thin jaws, and white eyes, that shone with a delirious glare, as if his mind had been terror struck. There was a sickly, beseeching smile about his mouth. His skin between the freckles was as white as a leper's,

his teeth long and yellow. He looked as if he had witnessed the destruction about him, and as the only living thing spared, to make death seem more horrible.—“Who put you here to die?” said Paul to him.

“Nobody, sir.”

“Why did you come, then?”

“O, I can’t help it, I must come.”

“Must!” said Paul, “and why must you?”

The boy looked round timidly, and crouching near Paul, said, in a tremulous, low voice, his eyes glaring fearfully through a chasm. “’Tis he, ’tis He, that makes me.”—Paul turned suddenly round and saw before him, for the first time, the deserted tract of pine wood and sand, which has been mentioned.—“Who and where he,” asked Paul, impatiently, expecting to see some one.

“There, there, in the wood yonder,” answered the boy, crouching still lower, and pointing with his finger, whilst his hand shook as if palsied.

“I see nothing,” said Paul, “but these pines. What possesses you? Why do you shudder so, and look so pale? Do you take the shadows of the trees for devils?”

"Don't speak of them. They'll be on me if you talk of them here," whispered the boy eagerly. Drops of sweat stood on his brow from the agony of terror he was in. As Paul looked at the lad, he felt something like fear creeping over him. He turned his eyes involuntarily to the wood again. "If we must not talk here," said he at last, "come along with me, and tell me what all this means." The boy rose, and followed close to Paul.

"Is it the devil you have seen," asked Paul, "that you shake so?"

"You have named him, I never must," said the boy. "Strange sights I have seen, and heard sounds whispered close to my ears, and so full of spite, and so dreadful, I dared not look round, lest I should see some awful face at mine. I've thought I felt it touch me sometimes."

"And what wicked thing have you done that they should haunt you so?"

"O, Sir, I was a foolhardy boy. Two years ago I was not afraid of any thing. Nobody dared go into that wood, or even so much as over the rocks, to look at it, after what happened there."—"I've heard a foolish story," said Paul. —"So once, Sir, the thought took me that I

would go there a birds-nesting, and bring home the eggs and show to the men. And it would never out of my mind after, though I began to wish I hadn't thought any such thing. Every night when I went to bed, I would lie and say to myself that to-morrow was the day for me to go ; and I did not like to be alone in the dark, and wanted some one with me to touch me when I had bad dreams. And when I waked in the morning, I felt as if something dreadful was coming upon me before night. Well, every day, I don't know how it was, I found myself near this ridge ; and every time, I went farther and farther up it, though I grew more and more frightened ; and when I had gone as far as I dared, I was afraid to wait, but would turn and make away so fast, that many a time I fell down some of these places, and got lamed and bruised. The boys began to think something ; and would whisper each other and look at me, and when they found I saw them, they would turn away. It grew hard for me to be one at their games, though once I used to be the first chosen in. I can't tell how it was, but all this only made me go on ; and as the boys kept out of the way, I began to feel as if I must do what I had thought

of, and as if there was somebody, I couldn't think who, that was to have me and make me do what he pleased. So it went on, Sir, day after day," continued the lad in a weak, timid tone, but comforted at finding one to tell his story to, "till at last I reached as far as the hollow where you just now frightened me so, when I heard you near me. I didn't run off, as I used to from the other places, but sat down under the rock. Then I looked out, and saw the trees. I tried to get up and run home, but I couldn't; I dared not come out and go round the corner of the rock. I tried to look another way, but my eyes seemed fastened on the trees, I couldn't take 'em off. At last I thought something told me it was time for me to go on. I got up."

Here poor Abel shook so that he seized hold of Paul's arm to help him. Paul recoiled as if some unclean creature touched him. The boy shrunk back.

"Go on," said Paul, recovering himself. The boy took comfort from the sound of another's voice.—"I went a little way down the hollow, Sir, as if drawn along. Then I came to a steep place; I put my legs over to let myself down; my knees grew so weak I dared not trust

myself ; I tried to draw them up, but the strength was all gone out of them, and then my feet were as heavy as if made of lead. I gave a screech ; and there was a yell close to me, and for miles round, that nigh stunned me. I can't say how, but the last thing I knew was being mad and leaping along the rocks, while there was nothing but flames of fire shooting all round me. It was scarce mid-day when I left home ; and when I came to myself under these locusts, it was growing dark."

"Rest here awhile," said Paul, looking at the boy as at some mysterious being, "and tell out your story."

Glad at being in company, the boy sat down upon the grass, and went on with his story.—
"I crawled home as well as I could, and went to bed. When I was falling asleep I had the same feeling I had when sitting over the rock. I dared not lie in bed any longer ; for I couldn't keep awake while there. Glad was I when the day broke, and I saw a neighbour open his door, and come out. I was not well all day ; and I tried to think myself more ill than I was, because I somehow thought that then I needn't go to the wood. But the next day He was not

to be put off; and I went, though I cried and prayed all the way that I might not be made to go. But I could not stop till I had got over all the hill, and reached the sand round the wood. When I put my foot on it, all the joints in me jerked as if going out of place; so that I cried out with the pain. When I came under the trees, there was a noise, and shadows all round me. My hair stood on end, and my eyes kept glimmering; yet I couldn't go back. I went on till I found a crow's nest. I climbed the tree, and took out the eggs. The old crow kept flying round and round me. As soon as I felt the eggs in my hand, and my work done, I dropped from the tree, and ran for the hollow. How it was I can't tell, but it seemed to me I didn't gain a foot of ground,—it was just as if the whole wood went with me. Then I thought He had me his. The ground began to bend and the trees to move. At last I was nigh blind. I struck against one tree and another till I fell to the ground. How long I lay there I can't tell; but when I came to, I was on the sand, the sun blazing hot upon me, and my skin scorched up. I was so stiff, and ached so, I could hardly stand upright. I didn't feel or think any thing after this; and

hardly knew where I was, till somebody came and touched me, and asked me whether I was walking in my sleep ; and I looked up, and found myself close home.

“ The boys began to gather round, as if I were something strange ; and when I looked at them, they would move back from me.—‘ What have you been doing Abel ?’ one of them asked me, at last.—‘ No good, I warrant you,’ answered another who stood back of me ; and when I turned round to speak to him he drew behind the others as if afraid I should harm him,—and I was too weak and frightened to hurt a fly.—‘ See his hands ; they are stained all over. And there’s a crow’s egg, as I’m alive,’ said another. ‘ And the crow is the Devil’s bird, Tom, isn’t it ?’ asked a little boy. ‘ O, Abel, you’ve been to that wood, and made yourself over.’—They moved off one after another, every now and then turning round and looking at me as if I were cursed. After this they would not speak to me, nor come nigh me. I heard people talking, and saw them going about, but not one of them all could I speak to, or get to come near me ; it was dreadful, being so alone ! I met a boy that used to be with me all day long ; and I begged him

not to go off from me so, and to stop, if it were only for a moment. 'You played with me once,' said I, 'and won't you so much as look at me, or ask me how I am, when I am so weak and ill, too?' He began to hang back a little, and I thought, from his face, that he pitied me. I could have cried for joy; and was going up to him, but he turned away. I called out after him, telling him that I would not so much as touch him with my finger, or come any nigher to him, if he would only stop and speak one word to me; but he went away shaking his head, and muttering something, I hardly knew what, how that I did not belong to them, but was the Evil One's now. I sat down on a stone and cried, and wished that I was dead; for I couldn't help it, though it was wicked in me to do so."

"And is there no one," asked Paul, who will notice you, or speak to you? Do you live so alone now?" It made his heart ache to look down upon the pining, forlorn creature before him.

"Not a soul," whined out the boy. "My Grandmother is dead now; and only the gentle-folks give me any thing; for they don't seem

afraid of me, though they look as if they didn't like me, and wanted me gone. All I can, I get to eat in the woods, and beg out of the village. But I dare not go far, because I don't know when He will want me. But I am not alone; He's with me day and night. As I go along the street in the day time, I feel Him near me, though I can't see Him; and it is as if He were speaking to me, and yet I don't hear any words. He makes me follow Him to that wood, and I have to sit the whole day where you found me; and I dare not complain nor move, till I feel He will let me go. I've looked at the pines, sometimes, till I've seen as many spirits moving amongst them, as there are trees—O, 'tis an awful place,—they breathe cold upon me when He makes me go there.”

“Poor wretch,” said Paul.

“I'm weak and hungry,” said the boy, “and yet when I try to eat, something chokes me; I don't love what I eat.”

“Come along with me,” said Paul, “and you shall have something to nourish and warm you; for you are pale, and shiver and look cold here in the sun.”

The boy looked up at Paul, and the tears rolled down his cheeks, at hearing one speak so kindly to him. He got up, and followed meekly after, to the house.

Paul seeing a servant in the yard, ordered the boy something to eat. The man cast his eye upon Abel, and then looked at Paul as if he had not understood him.—“I spoke distinctly enough;” said Paul, “and don’t you see that the boy is nigh starved?”—The man gave a mysterious look at both of them, and with a shake of his head, as he turned away, went to do as he was bid.

“What means the fellow?” said Paul to himself, as he entered the house. “Does he take me to be bound to Satan, too? Yet there may be bonds upon the soul, though we know it not; and evil spirits at work within us of which we little dream. And are there no beings but those seen of mortal eye, or felt by mortal touch? Are there not passing in and round this piece of moving mould, in which the spirit is pent up, those that it hears not, and has no finer sense whereby to commune with them? Are all the instant joys that come and go, we know not whence nor whither, but creations of the mind;

or are they not bright and heavenly messengers, which, when this dull form drops off, and the spirit is set free, 'twill see in all their beauty, and drink in of their sweet sounds? O, yes, it is so; and all around us is populous with joyous beings, invisible to us as the air."

So fully had such thoughts absorbed Paul's mind, that when, upon entering the room, he met Esther and her father, he started, as if the sight of flesh and blood were strange to him. At dinner he seemed but half conscious of what was before him; his look and manner were abstracted; and when he replied to any remark, his answers were abrupt and from the purpose.

"You are a good deal of a dreamer, I know," said Mr. Waring at last; "but I think I never saw you less awake to what's homely and substantial in this world we live in."

"They sleep, and their eyes are sealed, who do not look beyond it," said Paul, just so as to be heard.

The old gentleman looked at Esther; but her eyes were fixed on Paul, who did not observe it, for his were cast downward. Her heart beat with uneasy sensations, and anxious, uncertain thoughts troubled her. She tried to command

herself; and as soon as she could, she spoke to him in an affectionate, cheerful voice. He looked suddenly up at her with a fond and rapturous gaze, as if an angel had spoken to him out of a cloud.—“Ah,” said she, playfully, “I’ve called you back to earth again, Paul.”

“Scarce to earth,” said he, his suffused eye resting on her beautiful face.—He had quite forgotten that any one was by, till the old gentleman spoke. The blood went quick to his cheek.

“What, so long married, and a lover yet?” cried Mr. Waring. “I thought love would have become a dearer sort of friendship ere this.”

“I doubt,” said Paul, half smiling, and glad to turn the affair into a speculation, “I doubt whether, in certain minds, love ever so changes its nature. It is a part of their constitution, and endures as long as they do, at least, I think so; though I cannot tell what old age and gray hairs may do towards a change. It is the only thing that has made me recoil from the thought of being an old man.”

“And what would you make of a pair of married lovers of threescore?”

“I like not thinking of it,” said Paul, with a fitful expression of pain. “I would rather part

soul and body, than lose long cherished and dear thoughts. Nor do I believe they will be lost. Those who are good enough for a happy state hereafter, must rest their chief hopes and pleasures, even in their attachments here, on that which is fitted to live forever. The corruption of humanity that's now about them will drop off, but essentially, I trust, our feelings and joys will remain the same. What makes my soul's chief earthly happiness would be my misery, did I not believe it eternal, like the soul itself. To die, will be but the full opening of this same mind with all its good affections, which scarcely bud here, to the light and sweet air of heaven. Is what we tread on here, truth,—and our imaginations all a lie? I would believe that these high and gladdening conceptions were not all a cheat, but that they will one day open in glory on our cleared and delighted vision. What is beautiful and true here, though it perish for a season, will put forth again in more perfect beauty in the morning light of that sun which will never go down. Pardon my warmth, Sir," said he, suddenly checking himself.

"Then," said Mr. Waring, "you think the after existence of the happy but the continuance

of their earthly affections purified and exalted, along, you mean, no doubt, with a greater love and knowledge of God.

“Much so, Sir.”

“Has not your religion too much to do with the senses?”

“It is idle presumption to reason about what we know so very little of. I was simply saying what were my hopes and wishes, and what gave me here, that which seemed to me like a fore-taste of joys hereafter, and had at times persuaded me, that what I felt was not a vain imagination. I cannot so separate the natures of the mind and senses as some would do. There is not an earthly beauty I look upon that has not something in it spiritual to me. And when my mind is fair and open, and soul right, there is not a flower I see that does not move my heart to feel towards it as a child of God. All that is, to my mind is a type of what shall be; and my own being and soul seem to me as if linked with it to eternity. I know that to many this is mere folly, and that even to those of highest reach it is but vague; for what can we have while here but intimations and dim semblances of eternity. Yet for that, a man might

as well deny he has a heart ; for he will find it growing the more a mystery, the more he studies it. We think of angels as having shapes and voices, and if the unbelieving would say that the writ is false, how came the mind of man from the beginning to conceive of such things as true ? Is that connected with our highest faith, and what seems inborn in the mind, a lie ?”

Paul became silent ; he was filled with happier and calmer emotions than he had for a long time known. Esther observed his tranquillity, and for a while she was blest with the belief that it would be lasting. She knew that such thoughts were not strangers to him ; but she had seen them before only when they came and went swiftly, lifting him suddenly and wildly out of horror and despair, to a rapturous height, then leaving him to sink deeper than ever. When his dark thoughts and passions seized him, they seemed to her more like outward, terrific powers which drove him whither they would, than like things springing from his own mind and heart. There was a mystery about them that made her fear when they took him, and yet her heart bled with pity for him.

There are souls which have hours of bright and holy aspirations, when they feel as if nothing of earth or sin could touch them more ; but in the midst of their clear and joyous calm they find some dark and frightful passion, like an ugly devil, beginning to stir within them. The mind tries to fly from it, but, as if it saw its hour, it seizes on its prey with a fanged hold,—rending all beneath it. Perhaps there are no minds of the highest intellectual order that have not known such moments, when they would have fled from the thoughts and sensations which they felt like visitants from hell.

Paul's mind was of this structure ; and so long and violently had he suffered under such influences, that his natural superstition, heightened by them, had almost persuaded him his passions were good or evil spirits which had power to bless or curse him. The story and appearance of poor Abel haunted him. He called it insanity ; but he could not shake off the feeling that the miserable wretch was the victim of a Demon. He began to tremble for himself ; and when he felt his violent passions in motion, the thought that they were powers it was in vain to struggle against, almost drove him mad.

The night for the ball at last came, and Esther's spirits rose as the hour drew nigh. She had left home but little for a long time past, and though her love for Paul was almost devotion, and there was a peculiar sentiment and delicacy in his little attentions to her and the fondness he showed her, yet an undefined awe, a dread of the happening of something fatal, oppressed her daily more and more ; and any change seemed to be the lifting of a weight from the heart, to let it bound and beat freely again. Her mind, and all her senses were peculiarly sensitive, and exquisitely alive to enjoyment. Her whole soul seemed to be in whatever she said and did. When Paul was happy, he looked on all this with a delight that cannot be told ; but when a gloom hung on his mind, and he saw her eloquent, impassioned face and earnest gestures, he remembered how deceitful and prone to sin are the best hearts, how soon the warmed passions may turn from good to evil, and he hardly dared look on what he indistinctly dreaded.

Esther came bounding towards Paul with a step as light as if she needed only the air to tread on. "Rouse you, ye dreamer," said she, playfully jogging him,—“we are late. Look

up, and vow to me that I was never half so beautiful before."

"O, that I can vow to you from day to day ; for you grow in beauty on me, as you grow closer and closer to my heart."

"What an angelic creature I shall seem to you at fifty then ! How lucky that you had me ; for who else would praise my beauty when turned of two score ?"

"Be not too sure, Esther ; my eyes may be shut to all beauty before that time comes. Then you may find others to praise it in you—if you will believe them."

"Not of death now, Paul, not of death now.—Come, let us be going. We've lived here in this stillness so long, that the sound of pipe and tabour will stir my blood like a new come Greenland summer."

"'Tis at a full and quick beat now, if I feel it right," said he, holding her by the wrist, "a little faster might do you harm."

"Beat it slow or fast, Paul, there's not a drop of it passes through the heart that is not warm to me with a love for you.—Think you I profess too much ?"

"No, not too much."

“Why then look you so sad upon it?”

“To remember that I cannot always think so.”

“And why not always? Do you hold me of so unstable a nature?”

“Ask me not what I cannot answer you. It is not myself,” cried he, starting from her.—**“They haunt me. I cannot ’scape them.—Away, away, I’m not your prey yet!”**—He walked the room violently, his clasped hands pressing down upon his head as if his brain would burst with its working. His eyes were set, and his teeth ground against each other. He stopped, and his frame loosened from its tenseness.—**“It’s over,”** said he, spreading his arms wide, as if just set free.

Esther shook with fear as she stood fixed, gazing at him. When the change came on him, she went to him.—**“Paul, my own husband,”** said she, taking his hand, **“come to me, tell me what terrible thoughts they are that tear you so.”**

“Thoughts, call you them? Visions, shadows, horrible, horrible shadows! Speak not of them; call them not round me again.—O, Esther, I am sore afflicted;—I would that I might not suffer so. Pray for my soul’s peace, Esther. It longs,

it longs to rest quietly in its love for you.—Put your arms round me. There, I'm tranquil now.”

“If they would keep you so, I would shelter you day and night, Paul, and look and think on nothing but you.”

“Even here I'm not safe ; there's no place of refuge for the hunted soul.”

“Above, there is, Paul, if we but reach upward.”

“I've striven in agony to reach it ; but when they will, these horrors, that have no name, pluck me down. But, come, they've left me now ; and the bosom's free again.”—He held her at his arm's length, and stood gazing on her.—“And could dark, terrible thoughts shake me so, before all this light and beauty ! Why, Esther, I feel by you, like a cast out angel by the side of one who had stood faithful.—I've held you too long. Your father waits for you ;—away, and forget my madness.”

“Not without you, Paul.”

“What, I ! No, in faith ! A married pair go regularly coupled at the hour set ! No, no, I'm not such a rustic as you take me for.”

“Do not so suddenly trifle in this way, Paul ; it grieves me more than all ; it is not your disposition.”

"In earnest, then, the blood heaves too heavy through me yet; when it flows more quietly, I'll come to you."

He pressed her hand gently as he put her into the carriage, and gave her one of those smiles which always went like sunshine to Esther's heart.—He saw her look back after him as the carriage turned down the road, and stretched his arms out towards her as if to clasp her to him. As he raised his hands upward,—**"O, heaven,"** he said, **"thou hast given her to me as more than an earthly blessing, let it not prove a curse upon my soul!"**—He felt something clasp his knees, and looking down, he sprang as from the coil of a serpent.—**"Were you sent to snare me now, you imp of Hell? How crawled you here, and for what?"**

"I watched for you under this thorn," whined out poor Abel, **"for I shall die if I cannot see you and speak to you. And when you prayed, I came up to you, that you would pray for me, that I might be spared going, if 'twere only for this one night."**

"I've sins and tortures of my own enough. Pray for yourself, poor wretch."

"I dare not, I dare not," cried Abel, **"lest He**

come and torment me. O, help me. You were good to me once."

"And what mortal might can shield you against unearthly powers?"

"I feel safer when near you, though you make me tremble. Not a soul beside will so much as hear me when I call after them. I've thought, that, perhaps, nobody but you could hear me any more."

"And why I?—Don't put your lean hand on me."

Abel shrunk back. The loathing that Paul felt turned to pity. "Come, you are hungry, and must have something to strengthen you." Paul took the boy into the house; and having seen him fed, gave him an old rug to lie upon. "Sleep there, Abel, you shall not to the wood to-night." Abel felt comforted and protected for the first time since the thought of the wood entered his head. In a few minutes he was in a sound sleep.

Paul took his way along the greensward to the village. As he passed the bush under which Abel had been sitting, he involuntarily moved a little aside from it.—"Why has that boy fastened so on me? I like it not. There'll no good

come of it. When he is near me, I feel him as one cursed, and bringing a curse. The powers of darkness put him between me and mine; and promptings of dreadful portent are whispered in my ear." His mind grew more disturbed as he went forward, ruminating on these things; till having nearly reached the end of his walk, he stopped under a large tree, that he might gain sufficient composure and a clear brow to enter the room.

Not a leaf moved, and the stars shone in silence. Suddenly the music burst forth from the hall;—To Paul it was like a crash that jarred the still universe. "'Tis hateful to me;—noise, and folly, and hot, hot blood. Warm hands, and flushed cheeks, and high beating hearts. And where is she, who an hour ago would have sheltered Paul, and looked and thought on nothing but him? No more to her now than if he had never been—or had slept a twelvemonth in his grave. These creatures are beautiful and fair, and would be innocent as flowers, did none but heaven's winds visit them; but the world's breath blows on them, and taints them. Beings all of sensations; and so love's grateful to them. But it roots not deep and si-

lently as in man; from whom to pluck it out, tears up heart and all.—Leave me, leave me, let me not think on't!" He rushed forward, as if to fly from the thought.

Scarcely considering whither he was going, he was in an instant before the folding doors of the hall. Coming out of the quiet and the dim light, the flare of the lamps, the whirl and confused motions, and the babel sounds of a ball-room, breaking suddenly upon him, blinded and confounded him. He pressed his brows hard together to recover his senses a little, and then entered the room. One who is unused to such scenes can scarcely tell his familiar acquaintances at first. Paul was in eager search of one, as he passed round the room close to the wall. He had just gone by without discovering her, when a well-known laugh, though louder than usual, made him suddenly stop. As he turned, Esther sprang forward in the dance as if going up into the air. A bright smile, full of pleasure, was in her face, as she gave Frank both her hands; and as they bounded swiftly by Paul, without perceiving him, he saw the warm glow upon her cheek, her eyes turned a little upward, suffused and sparkling, her dark, floating curls rising, then

just touching her snowy forehead, then lifted with the motion again, her bosom tinged with a delicate tint, and moving with a fluttering beat. "Heaven and hell!" said he to himself, "ye work side by side in this world, though with opposite intent." Every nerve in his body seemed to shoot and burn with electric fire. It passed off, and a sudden weak, sick feeling followed it, that he could scarcely stand. A cold damp stood on his pale brow and trembling hands. He drew behind a couple of gentlemen, who were talking together, looking on the dance, and leaned against the wall. For a while he dared not look up; nor did he hear any sound till the conversation of the gentlemen suddenly drew his attention.

"What an exquisite figure, and how pliable and graceful," said one. "Every limb seems full of life."

"Yes," said the other, "and how sinuous the motions; they run into each other like the swells of the sea. Oh, she's a very Perdita in the dance. And Frank was an elegant looking fellow before he went away, yet travel has improved him wonderfully. I would bet my head on't, that she is sighing this moment at thinking

she said him nay, or had not waited to see him what he is now, that she might to-night unsay it again."

"Then she is a betrothed damsel, ha? Poor girl, that she should be in such haste. I warrant ye, this dancing partnership will put thoughts into her head which a lover would hardly like finding there. It will be well for her by and by if she doesn't talk in her sleep."

"If she can't teach her tongue silence then, 'tis a gone case with her already, for she was married long ago."

"And what gallant knight won her? He must keep watch and ward, for in faith I'm half a mind to make off with her myself, could I bring her to it."

"No hard matter that, if report speaks her Lord truly. 'Tis a sort of Vulcan and Venus match, I'm told, and that he looks as black as if just out of a smithy; and is glum, and says nothing. By all accounts, they are dead opposites in mind and body. She'll be on the wing all night, I vouch for it, and make up for the last month's caging."

"Poor girl, I pity her. But how could she find it in her heart to refuse Ridgley? I should

have thought that for a man like him, one asking would have been enough, any where."

"Why, lord, she no more meant it, than she did to die a maid. The blockhead might have known she was a coquette, as every one else did, and that she was but teasing him. One with half an eye might have seen what a favourite he was with her. Why, she would have gone to church barefoot rather than not have had him. The fool took her in earnest, and went upon his travels, and she married to vex him. Silly things! Unless she wears the widow's stole they may pin their hearts out now—or else the stars must win at it. But come away, I'll look no longer, lest I covet my neighbour's wife."—And off they moved, arm in arm, casting their eyes back upon Esther as they went.

Every word they uttered entered Paul's soul. His brain felt to him tightened and hardened like sinews, with the dreadful thoughts that rose in his mind. In a moment, all the misgivings and surmises of his doubting and gloomy soul, on which, till now, he scarcely dared send a glance, were turned to certainties; and his eyes fastened on them as if held by some charm. He pressed with his back against the wall with

look of horror ; and with fixed glaring eyes, as if crowds of spectres were rising up before him ; and his hair stood up as if life were in it. Those near him observed his strange appearance, and drew softly back, looking at him and then at each other in silence, as if in wonder and fear at what they saw. He took no notice of what was passing, but seemed to be gazing on something terrible which none but he saw. The dancing had stopped, and a mysterious silence spread like a shadow over all that part of the room. Esther spoke in a clear, gay tone to some one by her. The sound struck his ear ; he gave a leap forward, his eye still fixed on the floor.—“ Ha ! are ye there ? ” muttered he.—Presently a change seemed taking place in his mind, and he looked round him as if asking where he was.

Mr. Waring, who observed something unusual had happened, went that way, and found Paul standing alone, his eye dull and wandering, his whole frame trembling, his lips livid, and the sweat standing in big drops on his broad, pale forehead. Seizing Paul by the arm, as he called him by name, and shaking him to rouse him, Paul started, giving the old gentleman a look of amazement.—“ What mean ye, what’s the mat-

“What you handle me thus? Ha, ha,—I did know you, old man. Your daughter’s fair honest, is she not; and loves her husband, ah, truly, does she not? for she herself loves me so.”

This pent atmosphere has overcome him,”

Mr. Waring, “he’s unused to it.” And turned Paul, to lead him into the open air.

He looked at him once more, as if to ask what he was doing, and then suffered himself to be led out of the room. He took, without seeming conscious of it, what Mr. Waring gave him; and walked to an outer door.

“This night air’s cold,” said Paul, shuddering.

“Cold?” asked the old gentleman, surprised. He felt of Paul’s hand and forehead; it was like touching the dead.

“You’re ill, quite ill, Mr. Felton; you must come. Let me find Esther.”

“I’ve found her out before you, old man.—

,” said he, in an eager whisper, seizing Mr. Felton by the arm, and looking close in his face, “the net’s nigh set that’s to catch that bird; would you scare her away?”

“This will never do; you must go with me now. Your situation is worse than you are aware of.”

"No, in faith, it is not," said Paul bitterly. "It was, but I know the worst now.—Let's to the room ;" said he quickly, "the fit's over, and I'm well again."

"Not well I fear," said Mr. Waring.

"Yes, quite well, mind and body both ;" replied Paul, drawing himself up briskly and rubbing his hands together hard, "and I'm calm, perfectly calm." He turned, and leaving the old gentleman at the door, walked into the room as composedly as if nothing had happened. Those who had seen him, supposed that the close, hot air had oppressed his brain, and thought nothing more of the matter. Mr. Waring remembered his mysterious words, and was alarmed ; for he had some little insight into the structure of Paul's mind.

Esther had mingled with the crowd at a distant part of the room ; but Paul soon discovered where she was ; for she was carrying on a brisk conversation with those round her. He drew near enough to hear her gay laugh, and the bandying of smart and pleasant sayings from one to another. Other thoughts and feelings filled Paul's soul. He stood amidst all the light and rattle like some black, solid body that noth-

penetrated. Mysterious shapes, which told in part of something dreadful, were wandering through his mind with a fearful, shadowy stillness—the scene directly before him seemed set off at an infinite distance; and his lonely soul held its own musings, known to none on earth.

“Can we love,” said he to himself, “and one so sad, and yet no secret sympathy tell the other of it? Were Esther cast down, though I saw her, the spirits that are about us, and know what’s in our hearts, would whisper it to me.—Fool! boy! Talk I of love? Is not her heart another’s? Ere I knew her, ’twas his. In my mind—in mind she’s his now—at this instant, it is.”—He darted from the place he was in, and taking his stand just outside the circle, and opposite Esther, stood watching her, without being seen. Frank was by her side, playing with her. “What, so constant!” said Paul to himself. “Could not the seas nor travel cure you! But I have that that will. Yet ye’re a faithful pair; and it would break two loving hearts. No, no, I will not be cruel. Why talk I of you, ye coxcombs?—What are you to me? ’Tis she, ’tis she; and I’ll see what’s in that heart, though I am far from her.”

“And where’s Mr. Felton to-night, that he’s not with us?” asked one.—“O, at home, no doubt,” answered a peevish maiden. ‘He loves no plays, as thou dost, Antony,’” said she maliciously, looking first at Frank and then at Esther. Esther could not but observe her very significant manner; and innocent as her heart was of all improper thoughts, she felt pained and embarrassed. Paul watched the changes of her countenance. “And is her name so stale already?” said he to himself. “Do they tell her to her very teeth that she’s a ——?”—There was a short pause. Esther was looking beyond the circle to relieve herself of the sight of those immediately about her, when her eyes suddenly met those of Paul, which were fixed on her with a deadly look. She started back with a shriek. There was a general alarm, and Paul pressed in towards her.—“What’s the matter, what was it?” cried they all at once. “I know not,” said Esther, trying to recover herself a little. “’Twas a—a spider, I believe.”

“Ugly things those,” muttered Paul to her in an under tone, as he half supported her,—“that lie hid in corners with meshes spread for silly flies. Beware, for they draw the blood, and

ve their prey hanging for the common eye." Her shuddered at his words, as she heard breath come hard from suppressed passion. She nearly sank to the floor, confounded, mortified and afraid. Never had Paul looked on her before. She had seen hate, and revenge, and triumph in his eye. Then, lest those about her should suppose the consciousness of detected, guilty thoughts had overcome her—it was more than she could bear.—"I'm ill. O, take me away," she cried in an imploring tone. Frank stepped eagerly forward. "Not you, not you," he said impatiently, waving him back, while Paul supported her in his arms, his eyes resting on her pale, sorrowful countenance.

"Where's my child," cried her father, rushing forward, as Paul was bearing her to their carriage.

"Safe, with her husband," answered Paul, in a steady but gentle voice. The old gentleman looked up at him, and saw a tear in his large, dark eye. Taking out his cloak, Paul wrapt it carefully about Esther, and placed her in the carriage.

"Will you go with us, Sir?" said Paul, respectfully. Mr. Waring put his foot upon the

step.—“I had better not,” thought he, and drew back. Esther observed her father’s hesitation; and putting out her hand to him, said, with a forced smile, “I shall be quite well presently. Good night, Sir.”

She sat silent, as they drove homeward. She had not conjectured what were Paul’s thoughts. It was humbling enough to her, that her husband should have heard such gross insinuations against her, and should have looked as if some impropriety or trifling in her conduct, had laid her open to the slants of the malignant. “He it is that is insulted,” thought she; “and it is I who subjected him to it, and left no way of revenge to his proud spirit.”—She looked timidly at him. He was leaning bareheaded out of the carriage window. There was no longer any anger in his countenance, but it told of heart-sickening melancholy, and pity for the faults of those we love.—“Paul,” she said, but could not go on. He appeared not to notice her; but after a while, asked—still looking on the trees playing in the breeze and moonshine—“what were you about, saying, Esther?”

“Nothing, nothing, only that I fear the change to this damp air may be dangerous to you.”

“Never fear that, there’s a fever here,” said he, striking his forehead rapidly with his fingers, “that must be cooled quickly, or ’twill sear the brain.”

They drove on, Paul sitting as before.—“Have ye no sense of your glad motions?” said he, as he still looked out on the trees. “Can ye be so innocent and look so gay, and yet feel no joy? Sure, you have your delights unto you, and the morning sun shall take you in them fresher than when he left you. Blessed creations of a kind Father, ye know not sin nor sorrow; but man lies down and rises to them both.”—Esther could bear this no longer,—“My husband,” she sobbed out, as she sunk upon his bosom, “O, take me to you, and bless me with them; for I too am innocent, though not as pure as they are.”—He folded her in his arms as tenderly as a father would a lost child returned, and she felt a tear drop on her forehead.

“You need rest, my love,” said he, kindly, as he led her into the house. She turned and looked at him.

“There is no rest for me, Paul, when I have broken yours, though I never meant it.”

“The whirlwind has gone over. You see me calm now.”

“Calm and fond, but not happy, Paul. I never thought to live to grieve you.”

“Our griefs are mostly our own creations, Esther; and so may mine be. I’ll call myself to ’count for them, while you go sleep. To-morrow all will be well. Good night.”

“Innocent, though not as pure as they are,” repeated he to himself, as he walked the room.

“Said she not so? As yet she has sinned in mind only.—Body and soul not both bound over to hell yet,” he cried, stamping his foot in agony.—

“Remorse, or fear, or I know not what, holds her still. Did she not wave him back as if she dared not trust herself? And speaks not that conceived guilt? And did they not twit her of it,—all of them to hear it, and I, her husband, standing by? And when she saw me, O, she confessed it all, all.—Down, down, ye thoughts, that rise like fiends within me—tempt me not—drive me not mad!” He rushed wildly from the room, as if pursued by spectres.

As he hurried through the passage to his study, his foot caught in the rug on which Abel was sleeping. He started back as if the powers of

darkness had crossed him in his flight.—“Have ye snared me then? Is there no way left me?” Abel lay with his limbs drawn up, and the muscles of his face distorted, as if some sharp pain wrung him. Every now and then his mouth drew convulsively, and he uttered broken, weak cries, as if he dreamed some one was tormenting him. As Paul looked on his shrunk-on body and ghastly face, it seemed like the carcass of some wretch that had pined away miserably to death, and that some imp had entered it as his place of sin and torment.—“Sent to make me a victim cursed and abhorred as yourself. I see it all, and yet you cling to me, that I cannot shake you off.” He raised his lamp to get a more distinct view of the object before him. The light flashed upon Abel. As he opened his eyes upon Paul, he gave a long shrill cry, hiding his face in his hands.—“Not yet, not yet,” begged he, twisting himself round, till on his knees. “One more day, before you take me with you. The deed’s not done yet; I cannot go till that’s, that’s done.”

“And has the soul’s working so changed the visage, that he does not know me? Is my fate writ with a mark like Cain’s upon me?—

Rouse you," said Paul. "Whom do you take me for?"—At the sound of Paul's voice, Abel curled down upon the floor.

"I thought He had come for me," cried Abel; "for They've told me He would come; and yet it could not be now; for They have been whispering me all night long that I must do it before I went."

"It?—What?" asked Paul impetuously. "Art mad?"

"I cannot tell you. Something dreadful, that I'm afraid to do; and yet it must be done,—and then I'm lost," he screamed.

"And quickly," said Paul, "for you're about it now, though you know it not. You're here,—within me. Dar'st look on him you're blasting?"

"I'm gone, I'm gone," shrieked Abel, clinging to Paul's feet. "Help me, save me!"—A loathing hate entered Paul. His teeth set, and his foot drew up as if he would have crushed the boy. Abel's hold relaxed, and he lay panting and exhausted. Paul watched him till his breathing became freer.—"Up, and follow me. I'll know the worst that waits me."

Violent passions and dreadful thoughts had now obtained such complete mastery over Paul, that they came and went like powers independent of his will; and he felt himself as a creature lying wholly at their mercy. He prayed to them to spare him, as if they had been spiritual beings that could enter him and move about him and torment him, as they would. They took shadowy forms and wild motions, becoming dimly visible to his mind's eye.—“If I'm lost,” cried he, madly, as he left the house, “if ye have made me a child of hell, speak to me and tell me of it. If cursed deeds must be done of me, whip me not blind and bound to my work, but let me know it all, and what I am, that I may put my heart into the act, and share your devilish triumph.”

Paul pressed on so fast, that Abel, with his shambling gait, could hardly keep up with him. The eastern horizon was shut in; and when they came in sight of the rocky ridge, the moon, which was just setting, threw its light over the multitude of its grayish broken points, giving to its whole length the white lustre of the milky way.

“It seems the path of Heaven,” said Paul to himself, as his eye glanced over it, “but it tends not thither. The whole earth’s a cheat, and I!—I’m its dupe. Yet, I’ll be fooled no longer. Yes,—and they take angels’ shapes.—She that looks as if made to be an inhabitant of the pure, holy stars, why she—she that looks all innocence in her sleep,—for then they feign too—whom and what dreams she of now? And she’ll wake presently, and talk to her pillow, and give it his name, and fold it in her arms as she does me, me,—and fancy it him.—Tell me, tell me, ye that haunt me, is it not so? Can ye not give me to look into her very soul, and see its secret workings, as ye see mine?”—Abel trembled from head to foot as he watched Paul’s motions, and heard his terrific voice, without knowing what he spoke of.

The moon was down and sky overcast when they reached the rocks. Though Paul’s walks of late had lain in this direction, he was not enough acquainted with the passage to find his way through it in the dark. Abel, who had traversed it often in the night, alone and in terror, now took heart at having some one with him at such an hour, and offered, hesitatingly, to

lead.—“The boy winds round these crags with the speed and ease of a stream,” said Paul.—“Not so fast, Abel.”

“Take hold of the root which shoots out over your head, Sir, for ’tis ticklish work getting along just here.—Do you feel it, Sir?”

“I have hold,” said Paul.

“Let yourself gently down by it, Sir. You needn’t be a bit afraid, for ’twill not give way; man couldn’t have fastened it stronger.”

This was the first time Abel had been of consequence to any one, or felt his power, since the boys had turned him out from their games; and it gave him a momentary activity, and an unsettled sort of spirit which he had never known since then. He had been shunned and abhorred; and he believed himself the victim of some Demoniac Power. To have another in this fearful bondage with him, as Paul had intimated, was a relief from his dreadful solitariness in his terrors and sufferings.—“And he said that it was I who was to work a curse on him,” muttered Abel. “It cannot be, surely, that such a thing as I am can harm a man like him!”—And though Abel remembered Paul’s kindness, and that this was to seal his own doom, it stirred the spirit of

pride within him.—“What are you muttering to yourself, there, in the dark;” demanded Paul “or whom talk you with, you withered wretch!”—Abel shook in every joint at the sound of Paul’s harsh voice.

“It is so dreadfully still here,” said Abel, “I hear nothing but your steps behind me; and they make me start.”—This was true; for with his touch of instant pride, his terrors, and his fears of Paul were as great as ever.

“Speak louder then,” said Paul, “or hold you peace. I like not your muttering—it bodes no good.”

“It may bring a curse to you, worse than that on me, if a worse can be,” said Abel to himself; “but who can help it?”

Day broke before they cleared the ridge; drizzling rain came on; and the wind, beginning to rise, drove through the crevices in the rock with sharp, whistling sounds which seemed to come from the malignant spirits of the air.

They had scarcely entered the wood, when the storm became furious; and the trees, swaying and beating with their branches against one another, appeared possessed of a supernatural madness, and engaged in wild conflict, as if

re were life and passion in them; and their
 ken, decayed arms groaned like things in
 ment. The terror of these sights and sounds
 was too much for poor Abel; it nearly crazed
 him; and he set up a shriek that seemed for a
 moment to still the storm. It startled Paul, and
 when he looked at him, the boy's face was of a
 deadly whiteness. The rain had drenched him
 to the skin, his clothes clung to his lean body,
 it shook as if it would fall apart, his eyes
 were wildly, and teeth chattered against each
 other. The fears and torture of his mind gave
 something unearthly to his look, that made
 Paul start back.—“Abel—boy—fiend—speak!
 what has seized on you?”

“They told me so,” cried Abel—“I’ve done
 —I led the way for you—they’re coming,
 they’re coming—we’re lost.”

“Peace, fool,” said Paul, trying to shake off
 the power he felt Abel gaining over him, “and
 find us a shelter if you can.”

“There’s only the hut,” said Abel, “and I
 couldn’t go into that if it rained fire.”

“And why not?”

“I once felt that it was for me to go, and I
 went so near as to see in at the door-way. And

I saw something in the hut—it was not a man, for it flitted by the opening just like a shadow ; and I heard two muttering something to one another ; it wasn't like other sounds, for as soon as I heard it, it made me stop my ears. I couldn't stay any longer, and I ran till I cleared the wood.—O ! 'tis His bidding place, when He comes hither.”

“ And is it His own building ?” asked Paul, forcing a laugh.

“ No ;” answered Abel, “ 'twas built by the two wood-cutters ; and one of them came to a bloody end ; and they say the other died the same night, foaming at the mouth like one possessed.—There it is,” said he, almost breathless, as he crouched down, and pointed at the hut under the trees.—“ Do not go, Sir,” he said, catching hold of the skirts of Paul's coat,—“ I've never dared go nigher since.”—“ Let loose, boy,” cried Paul, striking Abel's hand from his coat, “ I'll not be fooled with.”—Abel, alarmed at being left alone, crawled after Paul, as far as he dared go ; then taking hold of him, made a supplicating motion to him to stop ; he was afraid to speak. Paul pushed on without regarding him.

The hut stood on the edge of a sand-bank that was kept up by a large pine, whose roots and bres, lying partly bare, looked like some giant pider that had half buried himself in the sand. On the right of the hut was a patch of broken ground, in which was still standing a few straggling, dried stalks of indian corn ; and from two dead trees hung knotted pieces of broken line, which had formerly served for a clothes-line. The hut was built of half-trimmed trunks of small trees laid on each other, crossing at the four corners, and running out at unequal lengths, the crevices filled in with sods and moss. The floor, which lay on the floor, was of twisted logs ; and the roof, of the same, had caved in, and but partly kept out the sun and rain.

As Paul drew near the entrance, he stopped, though the wind just then came in a heavy gust, and the rain fell like a flood. It was not a dread of what he might see within ; but it seemed to him, that there was a spell round him, drawing him nearer and nearer to its centre ; and he felt the hand of some invisible power upon him. As he stepped into the hut, a chill ran over him, and his eyes shut involuntarily. Abel watched him eagerly ; and as he saw him

enter, tossed his arms wildly, shouting, "gone, gone. They'll have me, too—they're coming, they're coming"—and threw himself, on his face, to the ground.

Driven from home by his maddening passions, a perverse delight in self-torture had taken possession of Paul ; his mind craved more intense excitement, and longed to prove true all that its jealousy and superstition had imaged to it. He had walked on, lost in this fearful riot, but with no particular object in view, and taking only a kind of crazed joy in his bewildered state. Esther's love for him, which he at times thought past doubt, feigned—the darkness of the night—and then the driving storm, with all its confused motions and sounds, made an uproar of the mind which drove out all settled purpose or thought.

The stillness of the place into which he had now entered, where was heard nothing but the slow, regular dripping of the rain from the broken roof, upon the hard trod floor ; the lowered and distant sound of the storm without ; the sudden change from the whirl and swaying of the trees, to the steady walls of the building, put a sudden stop to the violent working of his brain, and he gradually fell into a stupor.

When Abel began to recover, he could scarcely rise himself from the ground. He looked round, but could see nothing of Paul.—“They’ve bound me together,” said he; “and something is drawing me towards him. There is no help for me; I must go whither he goes.”—As he was drawn nearer and nearer to the hut, he seemed to struggle and hang back, as if pushed on against his will. At last he reached the door-way; and clinging to its side, with a desperate hold, as if not to be forced in, put his head forward a little, casting a hasty glance into the building.—“There he is, and alive!” breathed out Abel.

Paul’s stupor was now beginning to leave him; his recollection was returning; and what had passed, came slowly and at intervals. There was something he had said to Esther before leaving home—he could not tell what; then his gazing after her as she drove from the house; then something of Abel; and he sprang from the ground as if he felt the boy’s touch again about his knees; then the ball-room—and there seemed to be a multitude of voices, and all talking of his life. Suddenly she appeared shooting by him through the air—and Frank was there. Then came his own agony and tortures again: All

returned upon him in the confusion of some horrible trance. On a sudden, the hut seemed to enlarge, and the walls to rock ; and shadows of those he knew, and of terrible beings he had never seen, were flying round him, and mocking at him. His own substantial form seemed to him undergoing a change, and taking the shape and substance of the accursed ones he looked at. As he felt the change going on, he tried to utter a cry, but he could not make a sound, nor move a limb. The ground under him rocked and pitched ; it grew darker and darker, till every thing was visionary, and he thought himself surrounded by spirits, and in the mansions of the damned. Something like a deep, black cloud began to gather gradually round him. The gigantic structure, with its tall, terrific arches turned slowly into darkness, and the spirits within disappeared one after another, till, as the ends of the cloud met and closed, he saw the last looking at him with an infernal laugh in his undefined visage.

Abel continued watching him in speechless agony. Paul's consciousness was now leaving him ; his head began to swim—he reeled ; and as his hand swept down the side of the building,

as he was trying to save himself, it struck against a rusty knife that had been left sticking loosely between the logs.—“Let go, let go!” shrieked Abel, “there’s blood on’t—’tis cursed, ’tis cursed.”—As Paul swung round, with the knife in his hand, Abel sprang from the door with a shrill cry, and Paul sank on the floor, muttering to himself, “what said ‘They’?”

When he began to come to a little, he was still sitting on the ground, his back against the wall. His senses were yet confused. His wife seemed near him, and he thought he saw a bloody knife by his side. After sitting a little longer his mind grew gradually clearer, and at last he felt, for the first time, that his hand held something. As his eye fell on it, and he saw distinctly what it was, he leaped upright with a savage yell, and dashed the knife from him as if it had been an asp stinging him. He stood with his bloodshot eyes fastened on it, his hands spread, and his body shrunk up with horror.—“Forged in Hell! And for me, for me!” he screamed, as he sprang forward and seized it with a convulsed grasp.—“Damned pledge of the league that binds us!” he cried, holding it up and glaring wildly on it. “And yet a voice did

warn me,—of what, I know not.—Which of ye put it in this hand?—Speak—let me look on you?—D’ye hear me, and will not answer?—Nay, nay, what needs it? This tells me, though it speaks not. I know your promptings now,” he said, folding his arms deliberately; “your work must be done, and I am doomed to it.”

There was an awful calmness in his voice and bearing as he stood. His mind at last rolled back upon the past. As the thought of Esther’s love for Frank crossed him, he grasped the knife hard.—Then he heard her call out, “Paul!” And she looked all truth and fondness. “O! hang with your arms about my neck thus, Esther, and I’ll never again doubt you.—Stand off a little. Is not my eye murderous?—Have a care; touch not this bloody hand.—Come to me, my wife; I’ll not believe it, ’tis false, they lie, all lie, all! O, spare me, spare me,” he groaned out, throwing himself down and beating the ground madly with his arms. “Let her die, if ye’ve ordained it so, but not by me, not by me.”—His limbs gradually relaxed, and he lay silent. The fit of agony had passed. He rose slowly up, putting the knife into his bosom. “’Tis all in vain. I yield me to you; be it when you will.”

He quitted the hut. The storm had passed
 r ; and as he stood with folded arms before
 door-way, he saw the sun playing in chequer-
 spots under the trees ; and the myriads of
 er rain-drops, falling, or quivering on the
 ves, dazzled his sight.—“ ’Twas Your accursed
 ver that raised the storm and whirlwind,
 en you made a man a child of hell ; your
 rk is done, and now they’re laid again.”—

turned his melancholy eye upward. The
 ds lay white as snow-drifts along the air,
 ting off and deepening the clear blue sky.—
 le bright messengers from another world,” he
 d in a deep sunk voice, “ ye bring not glad
 ings to me now, as once ye did ; your holy
 luences no more fall on me. Ye pass me
 in silence ; yet once ye had a voice for me.
 go to tell of hope, and speak holy promises to
 pure in heart. Sin holds no communion with

Once all this beauty had been deep joy to
 ; but now it lies upon the eye, but enters not
 s bosom.—No, no, another sense is here now,
 d other sights. Tormenting flames, like those
 a soon to go to, shoot up, and burn me—burn
 . And this narrow body seems like a dark,
 ep cavern. And the eye turns inward, and

what sees it there? Spirits, uncouth things, sporting and fighting there. Yes, 'tis like the place Ye just now took me to, when ye made me yours, and put upon me this deed of horror.—Let me do it quickly, quickly. Make me not walk longer in all this brightness, a fiend of darkness—hide me from it, and I'll, I'll come to you.”

Soon he became calm again. The look of despair passed off, and a mysterious gloom, and a fixed and dreadful purpose seemed to settle on him. He walked forward. As he drew near Abel, who was sitting where Paul left him, the boy quaked and looked aghast at him, as at one who had just risen out of the abode of evil spirits. And well he might, for there was a visionary horror, mingled with desperate resoluteness in his face, which would have startled a firm man who saw him then for the first time. He turned his dark eye slowly down on Abel, without speaking, and then moved on. The boy felt as if all strength went out of him. He got up with difficulty, and followed Paul with a watchful look, and at a greater distance than usual. He could scarcely draw his breath; and when Paul's pace slackened a little, now and then, as he was lost in thought, Abel would stand stock still, fearing to be any nearer.

When they at last reached the top of the ridge, Paul stopped and looked down upon the fields and houses which lay beyond it. Abel retreated a little, yet dared not fly. At length Paul pressed on him. He shrunk back, and tried to seek another way; but his eye seemed drawn back and fastened upon Paul's by some magical power. He writhed, and twisted, and clasped his hands, and looked in Paul's face, as if imploring he be spared. Still he drew nearer and nearer, as if a snake's eye charmed him, till he stood close to Paul's side.—“Think you, Abel,” said Paul at last, raising his arm and pointing towards the houses, “that the storm was up in that cursed place only, or that it drove yonder?—To hear Paul speak once more was like returning life to the dead.—“I'm afraid,” said he, catching his breath; “I'm afraid—but I can't guess;—and I shall never know,” he added, tears trickling through his downcast lashes, “for not a soul that I should ask would ever tell me.—No one speaks to Abel but you. May be they had better not, for I might be made to harm them, too.—O, save me from it,” he cried, falling on his knees before Paul, “you fed me, and spoke to me. O, I would die sooner.”

"'Tis done already," answered Paul, in a deep, firm tone. "Your work is done, and mine is doomed to me. There's no escape." Abel fell, like one dead, at Paul's feet.—"Poor wretch," said Paul to himself, looking down upon him. "The instrument of my doom too, and yet I would not curse you. Twinned with me in misery, and bound to crime by chains that can't be broken, I'll feel a fellow's kindness for you while we're here.—What's to come beyond, I know not.—And do You not only take us in our vices? Are babes and innocents all, all swept into your toils?"

He stooped down, and raising Abel, set him with his back resting against a rock. The boy opened his eyes and looked round him, as if not knowing where he was. Paul spoke kindly to him; and when he had a little more recovered, bade him take comfort, and then went back to get some water for him. He reached the place; and tearing some hairy moss from the rock the water trickled over, soaked it in one of the little hollows, and carried it in the palms of his hands. When Abel saw it, he gave an hysteric laugh; and seizing it, sucked it greedily through his long teeth.

"Can you walk now, Abel?" asked Paul, at length.

"I'm quite well again," answered he, looking up at Paul, as if to thank him.

When they had reached the clump of locusts, Paul said to him, "You must leave me now. You must be faint for want of food;" and he gave Abel a piece of money. Abel looked at the money, and then at Paul.—"And what good will this do me?" asked Paul. "Nobody will sell to me."

"Not sell to you, foolish boy!" said Paul, scoffingly. "Why, that buys souls daily! Men and women sell themselves to one another for that, and swear before God 'tis all for love. Did you go to them, child, tailed and clawed like the Devil himself, they'd feed you for that, though 'twould be your last hour else."—Abel seemed comforted at this; and putting the money into his pocket, as he thanked Paul, took his way to the village. Paul followed the path that led home.

When he turned a little wood, and the house appeared in sight, he stopped suddenly. A sense of guilt and fear checked him; and it was some time before he had resolution enough to go for-

ward.—“What! shall I be driven from my own door like a beast of prey! They know me not, nor the work I am ordained to. Why does my very own make me tremble thus?”

It was a warm sunshiny noon when he reached the house, and there was that stillness round, which, in the country, sometimes pervades all nature like a diffused spiritual presence. Paul felt as if this brightness and quiet betrayed him. Every thing he passed by seemed to have a knowledge of him, and strange eyes were on him. He hardly dared look round. He looked up at his wife's windows. The shutters were closed,—“Sleeps yet,” said he. “That is well;” and he entered the house with more composure.

He went with a cautious step to his own room, and locked himself in. As he passed near his glass, he started back, as if some evil spirit appeared to him.—“Have they not only changed my soul,” cried he, “but transformed this body, too, that the world may know, and shun me? Is the deed writ here—here on this forehead, that men may read it when they look on me?—I'll not live on, the dread and mock of mortals. Now I'll do it, now, while she sleeps, and end it.—Then take me to you, fit for the hell I go

."—His eyes gleamed fire as he clinched the life in his raised hand, as if about to give the blow. At the sight of himself again, he dropped the knife and covered his eyes with his hands.—Take, take that vision from me, that tells me what I am, and shall be! O, show me not myself, cursed and fallen! I'll do it; but blind to the sense of what I am and must be." He had undergone too much to bear it longer, and sinking into a chair, his limbs relaxed, his eyes soon grew heavy, and he fell into a deep sleep. Esther waked refreshed; for Paul's affectionate tones and kind manner when she left him quickened her spirit. When she inquired for her husband, the servant said he saw him enter the house, and believed he was in his room. Esther went to the door and knocked gently; there was no answer. She tried to open it, but it was locked. She called out, "Paul!"—"Is the hour come?" cried he, starting out of his sleep.—"I'm ready then;" and putting his hand to his bosom, the knife was gone.—"Where have I been?" said he to himself, looking round,—Was't all a dream? Was there then no instrument of murder given me? And is there no need of death on my hands?—She's not to die

then, and I am free of them!" cried he with a shout.

"Paul! Paul!" called out Esther, terrified at the sound, "let me come to you."

"Yes, yes, and safely you may come. I'll not harm you, upon my life, I'll not harm you," he said partly to himself, and moving towards the door. As he advanced, his eye fell on the knife, as it lay on the floor. His blood ran cold, and a sick feeling came over him. Then his sight and all sense left him. Esther listened; but all was still.—"He's dead, he's dead," shrieked she, trying to force the door. The noise brought him to himself.—"Hush! hush!" said he, in a low tone, as he picked up the knife with a shaking hand, and concealed it in his bosom, "let there be no noise."—He stepped slowly and softly to the door, and opened it cautiously. He raised his finger in sign of silence.—"Hush!" he whispered, "or you'll rouse them. Do not tremble so at me. There is no danger yet; the hour is not come."

Esther entered the room. As Paul took her hand, she felt his cold and damp. "Paul, my husband," said she, as soon as she could speak, "what is it? Why do you look so wild and

lost? Rouse yourself; tell me what has happened."

"Happened," repeated he, unconsciously. He stood a little while silent and abstracted. "Did you ask what had happened?"—Then putting his mouth close to her ear and whispering eagerly—"To hear it would be your last. What's seen in the spirit, cannot be spoken to flesh and blood."—She shuddered, for there was something unearthly in his voice.

"Merciful Heaven," cried she, looking upward, "save him, save him; let him not go mad. Do with me as thou wilt, but spare my husband."—Her prayer passed through Paul's dark and troubled mind like the light.

"Is there yet a Heavenly Power? And are there holy angels to guard us still? The fiends have not all then, and their domain fills not the whole air! No, 'tis not all dark; there's light beyond. See there, Esther," said he, seizing her arm, as he pointed eagerly upward; "there are bright forms, dazzling bright, moving in it. Can'st see them?" He looked as if more than mortal vision was given to him. The sense of all about him was gone, and he went on talking to himself, as he gazed. "There they are,

passing away, till buried in the very brightness! Now they come again, hosts, myriads, and with speed of fire!—The darkness, and the evil ones, too, are flying—they are gone! Now the light gushes! 'Tis all, all one flood of glory round me; I'm safe, I'm safe, Esther!" he gasped out as he fell on her neck.

"O, my wretched, lost husband!" she cried, as she folded her arms round him, and looked upward with streaming eyes, "Is there no help for you? Will not Heaven have pity on you?"—Paul remained silent and motionless. "O, speak to me, be it but one word," said she, raising him gently. "Look at me, will you not, Paul?" He did look, but it was as upon one he did not know.—"Why do you stare at me so? Do you not know me, Paul,—Esther,—your wife?"

"I think—I remember something—Yes, 'tis all clear now. But they have not betrayed me to you? They've not told you what's to be done? Believe them not, they belie me. Did I not just now tell you I was safe?—and then no harm, you know, can come to you."

"Harm! Safe! What mean you? Do not keep me in fearful ignorance. By the love you bear me, tell me what it is that shakes your reason so."

“That must not now be. I serve the powers of the air. When you’re a spirit in Heaven, and I in darkness, you’ll know all.—There! they flit, like shadows, in the light, and keep the sun from me; yet you are in it. That tokens what is to be.”

He paused. His wildness left him, and he seemed to be musing. At last he spoke.—“The hour is coming, Esther—it breathes upon me now, when death will part us, and we shall never meet more through all eternity. Thy immortal countenance will then be radiant with holy joy; but I shall no more look on it; and thy voice of love will no more sound for me.—Weep not for me; it can avail me nothing; the doom is on me. Nay, nay, ask me not what I mean. The book in which my fate is written, is sealed to you; you may not read it.—I must be alone awhile,” said he, opening the door. “Do not linger so. The time is coming when you would fain fly from me, and may not.—No more tears, Esther,” he said, taking her hands in his, as she looked up silently in his face. “What is this world’s misery to those who hope for rest beyond it?” He pressed his lips to her forehead, and, turning back, shut the door after her.

When Abel came to the village street he walked through it with more confidence than he had done for many a day ; for he remembered Paul's last words to him, and felt as if he had that in his pocket which would find him friends again. When he reached the shop door, where he intended buying something to eat, it was near noon, and the little room was filled with the wise ones who had come together to take their dram, and settle church and state. He stopped at the door and looked anxiously in, beginning to feel for his money ; for he no more expected to gain admittance without it here, than one does to a show. He stepped upon the door-stone, and began playing his change from one hand to the other, looking first at it, and then at the shopkeeper.

"Where got you those white boys, you starving?" asked the man. "Come in and let me take a peep at them. Is't honest money?"

"I came honestly by it," said Abel, trembling, and venturing a little within the door.

"That's no concern of mine," said the man. "And many a glass of liquor, I should miss the selling of, gentlemen, if none but fair gains bought it."

‘Who have you here?’ said one, setting down mug, which had just touched his lips, and ving off, as Abel sidled up to the counter.—Vhy, ’tis the curst boy! You’ll not take his ney, Sam!”

‘Will I not?’ replied Sam. “Hand over the and tell us what you want. I hold man or , who has money in his purse, to be every h a gentleman.”—Sam’s customers began to w back. As some were going out at the or, he called after them.—“Stay,” said he, owing the piece on the counter, “and hear it g. There’s music for you, my lads, sweeter in a church bell.”

“Don’t take it, Sam,” said the customer. He’s sent, and it will fare ill with you if you vo dealings with him.”

“Not take it! Why, you would rig him up out your cabbagings, fit to be the Old One’s har-quin, for another such piece as this,” said Sam, ting it drop through the hole in the counter, to the drawer.—“There, didn’t you hear em welcome him, the bright lads! What care whose coining it is? The Devil may have his int, if he chooses, and at little cost too. Who ink ye, but he, set the wheels of that coach

agoing? And she within it, looking so smiling and innocent, sold herself to one as old as Satan, though, to my mind, not so handsome or proper a gentleman.—'Tis the way of the world, and I'll not be singular! Bread, did you say my pretty youth? There it is; but have a care that it doesn't poison you, for the Devil is the father of cheats, and his children had the making on't."—Abel looked pleased as he took it. "There's a sweet smile. Call again, my lad, but at another hour, for these gentlemen have no great liking to you, and you may stop the running of my tap."

"I'll never take change of you again," said the tailor, as he left the shop, "till that drawer's empty; for I would as soon handle iron at white heat as touch that piece."—Sam laughed heartily, and called out to Abel as he crawled from the shop, "give my compliments to your master, boy, and tell him, that I should be happy to supply him, or any of his likely family."—Abel bent his way towards the house of his protector, and took a seat under the hedge, waiting his coming.

When Paul was once more alone, his last mournful and serious words to Esther still

ended in his ears. Her prayer for him (of which he heard something, as in a dream) as she folded her protecting arms round him, the home and shelter he felt her to be to him when he fell on her neck and cried out that he was safe, the expression of woe, and pity, and love with which she looked up in his face at leaving him, came at once to his mind with a clear and calming influence. He felt the spring of blood once more throbbing in his heart, and his old affections flowed through him again with a living warmth. The passions that had raged in him like fire, went suddenly still; the horrors that had whirled round him and bewildered his brain passed swiftly off; he felt again the earth firm under him, and saw that he stood in the cheerful light that fell like a blessing upon all things that lay in the beautiful and assured tranquillity of nature. It was like coming out of one of those terrific dreams, in which we have passed through multitudes of horrid sights and dangers, and finding it bright morning, and all so safe and quiet as it was yesterday. The mere returning of the simple sense of reality brought tears of joy and thankfulness to his eyes.—“Am I again amongst the abodes of men,” said he, “and standing amidst the works

of God? Are light, and truth, and beauty once more round me? And were all the horrors I have passed through, a conjuration and a lie raised to damn me? Come, and assure me of it, Esther; for though thou walkest with me here, thou seemest to me kindred with higher beings. O, I have gazed upon thee, till thy rapt looks and joyous and beautiful motions have made me think thee an imbodied Spirit, revealing to me the creations that fill the world beyond us—a fair and passing vision, returning to the world, which, for a while, thou camest from.—Let me go to thee,” said he, rushing from his room, with eager delight, “and have thine eye rest on mine, and hear thy clear voice, and listen while you tell me you will not yet go from me.”

Esther was lying on a sofa, her full dark hair hanging over her face and snow-white arm, on which her forehead rested.—“My wife,” said Paul, as he kneeled down by her, “have I lived only to afflict you? I could throw away my life and count it nothing, to bring you peace. I should have been the soother of all your sorrows, and made your little daily joys; and is it I who

ave broken your heart, and made life comfortable to you?"

Esther sobbed audibly.—“No answer for me, Esther? Then it is so. Why do I ask? And yet a vain wish is struggling within me that you might say something to quiet a self-accusing mind. My will is not in my act; but when I wound your heart, mine bleeds doubly.”

“I do believe it, Paul,” said she, raising herself, and resting on him. “I have not lost our love yet; but dear as it has ever been to me, it is of small worth without your confidence, and cannot content me unless I feel, as it were, our hearts’ blood mingling and flowing on warm together. To be loved as I would be, we must have one life, one being; our sorrows must no more part us than our joys. But you have troubles of the mind, and shut me out, like a stranger, from them; and dreadful thoughts o’er-master you, and fatal purposes, to which you seem driven; and vain surmises and dark givings-out are all I know of them. Is this love, Paul? Is it all your heart asks for? And can it be in your noble nature, to give only the poor remnant of your mind and heart to her whose whole soul would alone content you?—Yet this is

nothing," she cried, hiding her face. "Those eyes which had ever but one look for me, last night were turned in anger and with a searching sternness on me.—Last night was it? Fears and grief have made it seem an age since. This I did not deserve, Paul, however too poor a thing I may be for a mind, of a reach like yours, to rest on."

"Your words go like swords through me. Do not break down this overburdened spirit with your just complainings, Esther. I would not be what I am. Think you it is in my disposition to torture and afflict you as I have done?—Look up, my love, and tell me if I'm not changed. There is an inward peace here, which I never felt till now. I've been out of the world—out of myself; and this naked soul has driven through fire and whirlwinds; but it has come back to its place of rest, to its quiet trust in thee, and the repose of thy full love. Could I look on this face, and—let me not name it. Is not this eye open as the day? And do I not read truth written on this brow? When I first saw you, Esther, you seemed made up of sensations more exquisite than other mortals knew how to think of, as if of a nature between us and angels, and

oulded to live a perpetual self-delight. And then you touched a flower or took its perfume, thought of the light and breeze, which shone with its beauty and was filled with its odour. You seemed to me too joyous and pure ever to have felt our passions or known our sins. And then I have sat by you, as I do now, with the soft touch of your hand in mine, and your eyes resting fondly on mine, I have felt as if undergoing a gentle change, and becoming a nature like unto yours; it was to me such as I have thought would be the intercourse of mortals when these bodies become incorruptible and glorified in another world.—Why should I try to tell what I now feel? It is a vain thing. Let me be still, while my senses are drinking in delight.”

Esther hung over him, and tears of joy filled her eyes. One fell on Paul's forehead. She wiped it gently away, and then touched her lips where it fell.

“Take them not away yet, Esther,” he murmured, “they are the seal of pardon for my wrongs to you, the pledge of your enduring love for me, the promise of unchanging joy through life, a joy that is to purify me, and fit me to live

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 with its odour.
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on with you through eternity.”—His voice faltered, and she, too, saw a tear trickle from under his closed lids.

“O, I could have lived ages of misery, for an hour like this, Paul, were life to end when that hour had run out; but I feel that years are in store for us, blissful as our souls can bear?”

“I hardly dared look up,” said he, “till I heard your voice, lest, waking, I should find it a heavenly trance I had been rapt in. Come, let me rouse myself and make sure that all is real,” he said, putting his arm round her, as he rose and walked with her to the window.

“How fresh and new all things look; or rather, how like it is to our return to old and remembered places where nature still looks young and healthful though we are growing old. But *we* are not growing old, Esther, for life is again beginning in us. Is it a new creation, or are other senses given me with which to see and feel it? The boughs swing up, and leaves play as cheerfully as if a breeze, for which they had drooped and waited, had just blown on them, and the declining sun lights up all things gloriously. What a glow it sends over that hedge,” said he, as his eye passed along it.—“Hide me! Again .

"'s come—he follows me!" cried Paul, turning terror-struck from the window. Esther looked at him. His face was wild and ghastly, and he staggered as he threw himself on her shoulders for support.

"Speak, speak, Paul,—who—what is it—here?"

"There! there! do you not see him?" he muttered in a hard-breathed whisper, and pointing back with his finger, without daring to look round.

"That boy?" asked Esther, trembling, "I've seen him before. Who, and what is he, that looks so like a tormented thing thrown out upon the earth to pain and mischief?"

"Speak not of him—power is given him. I feel him on me now," he screamed as he sprang with an enormous leap from her.—"Off! off!" he cried, struggling as if to loose himself from some strong grasp.—"They call me,—thousands of voices in my ears. Hear them, hear them, Esther!—I come! I come!" he yelled out madly, darting from the room, his hair on end, his spread hands and arms stretched out before him.—Esther tried to call to him, as she ran towards him. Her lips moved, but there was no sound, and she fell to the floor.

The shouts and cry alarmed the servants, who rushed into the room. They raised Esther, and laid her on the sofa. She gasped once or twice ; her eyes opened, then closed again. At last the colour came to her cheek, and starting up and staring round her :—" My husband," she called out. " Where is he ? Fly, seek him !"

" Which way has he gone, madam ?"

" I know not. Bring him, on your lives, bring him to me !" She rose and hurried towards the outer door.

" Stay, dear madam," said her waiting woman. " Whither are you going at this hour ?"

" Going to my husband, if he is on the earth—or to my grave."

" Do not leave the house bareheaded, and looking so crazed, madam."

" Well, well, bring me something, quickly." The woman returned, and was about following Esther.—" Stay here," said she, " he may return while I am gone, and miss me. I can go alone," she murmured, as she left the door. " When Paul leaves me, what has the earth for me to fear or care for ?"—She took her way to a large, intricate wood which lay off at a distance from the house, and bordering part of the rocky ridge.

Soon after Esther left the house, Frank called to see her. The woman told all she knew.—Gone out, and alone, and in such a state of mind! Which way?"—"Towards the wood you see yonder, Sir." Frank left the house in pursuit of her. He was alarmed for her, for he feared Paul, though he knew not why. He entered the wood, and wandered through it a long time without seeing her. The light was growing fainter and fainter, and he became more uneasy. At last he found her leaning against a tree, pale and still. He went up to her, and spoke kindly. She seemed not to regard what he said, but asked, without looking up, "is he so where to be found?"—"Search is making," replied Frank. "Let me help you home, for you are exhausted; and you can be of no service here."—She put her arm within his, and walked on slowly, trembling from weakness and her fears. Her tears fell fast; for Frank's friendly and gentle manner to her in her desolate sorrow, touched her heart.

When Paul left the house, his mind was so hurried and confused from the sudden shock and change he had undergone, that he missed the passage across the ridge, and continued wan-

dering along over and between the broken clefts, till at last he came upon the wood to which Esther had gone. He was pushing swiftly through it, when he suddenly caught-sight of Frank and Esther, at a distance. He sprang forward, once, with the leap of a tiger, then stood still. Every passion within him seemed suddenly struck dead, and the mind appeared collecting itself for something fatal ; all was gloomy and hushed. When he followed them, it was slowly and with a cautious step, as if he feared his tread would be heard. He kept at a distance, without losing sight of them, till they left the wood ; then stood concealed at the edge of it, watching them as they went towards the house.

Esther's strength gradually returned ; and she no longer needed the support of Frank's arm. As Paul saw her draw her arm from Frank's, "'tis a pity," he said, in bitter scorn, "the wood could not have gone with you, that the world might not interrupt your loves." He did not follow them, but continued pacing to and fro. Sometimes a low muttering sound came from him ; and then again a vehement gesture showed starts of passion within him. At length, he seemed to wake again to a clearer sense of the

ast, and his step quickened. "Yes," he cried, she did cross me—I saw her—she passed like an angel before me—and then! then she vanished. Why am I fooled with this show of innocence and beauty! the fiends have all!—The universe is a hell; and all else is to mock and torture us with longings. What! flesh and blood, and look so pure, when the pulse beats high,—hot! hot! And seem as ignorant as infancy, too, as if the rebel body told them nothing. Well may the spirits laugh at our self cheating! And me, too, dark and ungainly as I am—gloomy—silent!—O, 'twas a pretty fancy in her to have a fantastic passion, to fondle my ugliness for a while, then turn to the other, and clasp him in heightened beauty!—Ease me, ease me of this torture!" he cried, darting from the wood.

It was near midnight when he reached the house. He stopped under an elm near it, without any settled purpose. Esther's father had been sent for, but was absent; and Frank, unwilling to leave the house, remained till late. The clock in the village at last struck twelve, the moon was down, and one black cloud over the sky. At last the door opened, and as Frank came out, Paul saw him by the light in the entry.

He came so close to the tree, that Paul drew up straight, as he passed; but so dark was it, that he seemed like a blacker shadowy substance going by. "Now might I do it," thought Paul; "but he's not my victim; some other, doomed like me, must do that deed." When the sound of Frank's tread at length died away, Paul went to the door, and tried cautiously to open it. It was fastened.—"Shall I knock? No, 'tis better so.—I have it. I'll prove her; I'll know her false ere I do it.—To the hut,—to the hut! I'll watch her nightly. And Abel, he who serves me, and whom my soul serves, him I'll use too."

"It may not be," he muttered, as he groped his way along, "that the last sin's committed. And shall I kill her for her thoughts? Who then would live the day out, if evil thoughts were death to us? Do they not mingle like blaspheming spirits with our adoring moments? And shall we creatures of corruption ask of our fellows, love constant and untainted? But to feign it so—to weep over me in excess of joy and fondness—so she protested—and I with a simple faith believed it, did I? Women's tears! why, they are very proverbs.—The wood! the wood! Puts her arm in his, does she?—and leans on

too, in heart-sick languishment! Would, yet dares not; loves the sin to very madness, sighs, 'O, that it were no sin.' Away, away; he not look on't!—'Tis all a lie—a phantasm d by the powers of hell to make my soul s.—What! innocent, and died by my hand? them—how they mock and laugh at me! now more—all!"

He made his way forward as well as he could, the darkness and stillness oppressed him. It seemed as if all life in the universe was at an end, nothing but death everywhere, and like a cheer. He was climbing a rock, when a cold, hand suddenly pressed against his face, and a shriek went up, that made the whole atmosphere one shrill sound; it seemed to him to enter and fill his very body. He could not speak, nor move a limb. "You child of hell," he called out, at last, "who set you on to this? Speak, where are you? Will you not answer?" Abel, believing that he had touched one of the beings who continually haunted him, had his terror fallen from the rock.—"Was it not one of them?" he cried in a feeble voice. "Is it my master? Do come and help me. I'm bruised, dreadfully bruised. I meant no harm."

"And what brought you here at this hour, so dark a night?" asked Paul, getting down by him.

"I was after you, Sir."

"And why do you hunt me thus? Is it to make me, like you, a child of the damned? Why were you under the hedge to day? O! that was a moment of more than earthly joy to me, and your blasted form crossed me, and flung me out from heaven!"

"Do not speak to me so," said Abel. "I do what I must do: and they will never let me leave you any more."

"Well! well! but what made you look so soon for me here again?"

"I heard you cry out, and saw you run from the house; and then your wife fell, I thought, as she passed the window; and then I remembered what you told me, and what They are always telling me about something to be done. And it was put into my mind that that was it; and, somehow, I can't tell how, that I had made you kill her." Paul shuddered. "I would have run after you; but I was afraid they would see me and catch me; so I crawled through the hedge, and went away round the house; and

When I got there I could see nothing of you.

I looked all along this passage and over the d. At last, Sir, I went to the very hut, and ed in,—I did, truly, Sir, though something mered over my eyes so, I could hardly see. uldn't find you anywhere; so I thought I ld go back to the house and wait till night." here was nothing more said. Abel soon fell ep, while Paul sat musing till daybreak.

The clouds now began to break up and move like an army of giants; and the sun soon eared, flinging his light across them, and owing over them gorgeous apparel of purple gold; making them fit attendants on such a g.—“Rouse you and follow me,” said Paul, king Abel by the arm.

When he drew near the hut, the vision he had seen re, the world of terrors that had been opened him in trance, and the instrument then put o his hand, and for a purpose of which he ld not doubt, came all to his mind like a terrible and fatal certainty from which there was no ning away. He did not recoil in horror; there s no shuddering at the thought of the deed, no ny of prayer for escape. It acted like long ngeon darkness upon him. A sullen, gloomy

stillness spread over his mind, dulling his senses, and filling the soul with one dark, sleepy thought, dreamlike and dim. He entered the hut slowly, and stood in the middle of it. No muttering sound came from him, nor did he move a limb; his eyes rolled like a blind man's, seeing nothing, and searching for light. Abel, who had ventured as far as the door, stood, aghast and almost breathless, gazing on him; looking for the moment that he would sink into the ground or be swept off in sheets of fire. It was nearly an hour before there was any motion in him. At last his head sunk on his chest, his eyes were cast down, and Abel heard him breathe, once, long and heavy. He came towards the door with a slow, wandering step. Abel shrunk from him, as if he had been a dead man put in motion. He went to the edge of the bank, and sat down upon the roots of the pine, his feet resting on the sand. Abel still kept his eye upon him in awful suspense. There was a slender stone lying amongst the roots. Paul's eye at last fell on it, and became fixed. By and by he put out his hand and took it up. He continued a long while turning it over, and feeling of it, and looking at it on all sides. He put his hand to his bosom,

drew it back, giving a nod, as if saying, as as it should be. "Come hither, Abel," said. Abel went, as if drawn to him. "re's money for food," he said, taking some from his pocket. Abel put out his hand, but drew it back as Paul's came near it; and the coin fell on the sand. He stooped and picked it up. Paul did not seem to notice his fears.—"Come next to my house; find out all you can, and bring me word. Think not to betray me," Paul continued, without looking up. "I am waiting for you wherever you go."—Abel seemed to shudder at the words. Paul's eye was fixed on him in a side glance, till out of sight. Then looking cautiously round, he drew the knife slowly from his bosom. It was pointed. He felt of it. The point was dull. He drew it once across the stone. The sound curdled his blood. He went on with his work. The sun flashed upon him on the sand, there was no breeze amongst the bushes, and nothing stirring for miles round. No sound reached his ear, but the hot, singing noise of the insects under the tree, and the whetting of the knife. Blazing noon came, and Paul still sat on with his work, stopping only to feel the point of the knife, examine its handle and scrape

off the rust about it. The sun was at last about setting ; no cloud near it. It was glowing ; and its whole rim clearly marked. He looked on it wistfully, and seemed to pray in mind to it, not to forsake him. It half disappeared, then shot suddenly and silently down. His eyes shut ; his face for a moment was tremulous and mournful, but he did not sigh. When he looked up again, there were no bright tree-tops, no holy vesper of birds ; it was all sad, still twilight. Presently a light night-breeze passed over the pines, which sent out a low, mourning sound. It struck on his ear like the notes of spirits wailing the newly departed. He started up, and looked into the wood, as if he saw there the passing pall. He waved his hand once or twice before his eyes, to scatter the vision ; then turning round again, and placing the stone back amongst the roots, and putting the knife in his bosom, went and seated himself before the hut.

Abel returned at night, but with little news. The servants, he said, were continually going out and in, but they would not look at him, nor answer him when he spoke to them.

“ Did you see none besides the servants ? ”

Only young Mr. Frank Ridgley. He went the house about noon; but I saw nothing of him."

"I'll know where he is to be seen then," cried Paul, rising.

He passed on through the wood and passage, took his way to the house. All was quiet. He walked round it, but saw nothing. It was as if like a place he was shut out from for ever, only blessed spot in a world where all else cursed. He stood looking on it, with long-land home-sickness. By and by a light appeared in his wife's chamber. He raised his eyes to it as to a loved star. Presently Esther appeared near the window. At the sight of her he covered his eyes with his hand. He could bear no longer; but rushing from the house, hurried back to the hut.

The next morning Abel was sent again; and the day was wearing away with Paul like the day before. He seemed scarcely conscious what he was doing, or what was the purpose of his mind. He returned a little past noon, telling him that he saw his wife with Frank, going toward the wood, on the other side of the ridge, about an hour before. Paul sprang up, and ran for-

ward, Abel following him. He went over every mound and through every valley. Frank, however, had, in the mean time, returned with Esther from searching after her husband; (her father having before taken another route) and recollecting the Devil's Haunt, as it was called, set off alone for it immediately. After much clambering and toil he reached it, traversed the whole ground, and examined the hut all round; but no trace appeared of man's having been there for years. He returned late, tired and disappointed.

The sight of the wood, and what he had witnessed there, excited Paul's mind, so that he continued like a dog in full chase through it till near midnight, without considering how idle was his search at that hour. At last he became exhausted, his torpor returned, and he went back to his hiding place, like one walking in his sleep.

About dusk, the following day, Abel returned with the information that Esther's father was to set off the next morning on a journey of a few days. —“Then,” thought Paul, “will be my time to make all sure. No husband, nor father by, still rooms, and moonlight. Will they not put toys into the brain, and make the heart beat?”

“You must see him start,” he said to Abel, “and mark who goes with him.”

el was in full time to see Mr. Waring enter
 arriage. He had set off to make Paul's
 acquainted with what had happened, and
 consult with him what course to pursue. He
 had have gone sooner, had he not been afraid
 of Esther, whom he staid with to sooth
 comfort; for her mind was nearly unsettled.
 He promised, at his going, that no pains
 should be spared to discover Paul, and that he
 should be as a brother to Esther. The old gen-
 tleman left home with a sorrowful, misgiving
 ; and Abel hastened to make known his
 nature, which took place about noon.

Paul sat as he had done each day before, in
 the same spot, passing the knife slowly over the
 blade, then stopping and feeling of it, and look-
 ing over, seeming but faintly conscious of
 what he was about. His expression, though
 was dull and abstracted, and all his mo-
 tions heavy, slow and uncertain. The blood
 flowed sluggishly, and life seemed scarcely going
 through him. When Abel came up, Paul did not,
 usual, conceal the knife. Abel knew it
 instantly, though now bright and sharpened.
 His horrors rushed upon him; his knees
 knocked against each other, his hands struck

against his thighs, his eyes glared wildly, and he fell on the sand, at Paul's feet.—“The knife!” he cried, “hide it! hide it! there's murder!—the deed's doing, now, now! Save me! take me out o'this blood!” Paul leaped upon the bank, and stood looking down on Abel in stupid horror. He seemed to him struggling in a red, clotted sea, which presently appeared sinking into the ground, leaving drops here and there rolling on the sand, till at last he saw nothing more of them.

Abel recovered slowly; and raising himself on his knees, looked imploringly in Paul's face. He saw nothing there but an unchanging, sullen gloom.

“And what do you bring me?” asked Paul.

“I saw him leave the house in his carriage, this noon.”

“Alone?”

“Yes, Sir, alone.”

“To night it must be done then. Do you not hear them telling me, Abel?”

“Send me not again!” cried Abel. “O, spare me!”

“Is it not fated, boy? Think you the bonds of hell, that now hold you, can be broken?”

in ; is not He there, busy at your heart ?
 or work is doing—mine's to come, quickly."

"We're lost then!" cried Abel, springing up.
 Let me go with you."

Paul continued wandering through the wood ;
 and following close after him, wherever he
 led. They went on in silence ; Paul now
 then sending a glance back on Abel, as if
 were some evil thing dogging him at his
 heels.

He at last bent his way to the passage over
 the ridge ; and when he had passed it, stopped
 suddenly, turning his eye on Abel. Abel came

Paul pointed towards the house.—"Bring
 the word quickly." He then sat down upon a
 rock, gazing, like an outcast, upon the distant
 money-tops of his own home, while Abel
 walked away to his appointed task. Before
 long, Abel returned, saying he had been round
 the house but saw nothing, till at last, as he was
 going away, Mr. Ridgley passed him, and
 went in. A flush crossed Paul's cheek ; but he
 did nothing.

Frank, according to his promise to her father,
 went to see Esther. She was walking the room,
 when he entered, her arms folded, her long, dark

hair fallen round her pale face and sunken eye. She looked up at him, as asking if there were any good thing to tell her. Frank understood it. "Nothing as yet," he said, "but I hope—" She shook her head despondingly, as she turned away and walked to the window. "Do not despair so," said he, going towards her, "all may be right again in a few days."—She drew up, as she turned round upon him. Her look was mournful, with something of reproach in it, as if it were not in his nature to know what she felt, and that he was trying to cheat a common sorrow.—He shrunk back, and moved towards the door. She followed hastily after him, seizing him by the arm, "Nay, nay, go not from me so; trouble has made me strange. My more than brother," said she, giving him her pallid hand, "if you never see me again, do not remember that I ever looked in unkindness on you. Or if I ever spoke lightly when you were earnest, forget it, will you?—It seems to me, I think," she said, after a pause, and passing her hand over her brow, as if trying to recall her thoughts,—"I think I once made light of what you said to me.—Well, well, there's no more trifling in this world.—Yes, others may, but I may not.—"

"dark here ;—go where it's brighter !" said
 motioning him from her. He looked at
 earnestly. He saw the hurried state of
 and pass of, and her calm sorrow returning.
 bade her a kind good night, saying he would
 her again in the morning.—"Perhaps so,"
 she to herself, as he left the house.

he stood at the door, looking upward at the
 s, and then upon the fair, silent moon, whose
 t fell like sleep upon the earth. "So I
 d," said she, "and so the moon shone on us,
 en he first told me that he loved me.—And
 re—there he comes !" she cried, as her eye
 ght the figure of a man descending a hill in
 road. He sunk gradually down, till lost
 ind the hedge. At last she heard his step, as
 drew near the house. "Paul !" she called
 , in an eager, shrill voice. There was no
 wer, but that of the sharp taunting echoes
 t rang off amongst the rocks. "He's dead,"
 d she, shuddering, "and they mock me with
 " She listened with a beating heart. The
 n passed by, and the sound of his steady
 ad, died slowly away. She walked back into
 e parlour ; and lying down on the sofa, her
 fferings and present stato wandered like a
 eam through her mind.

Mr. Waring began his journey; but the farther he went from home, the more troubled he became. A misgiving, which he could not control, took possession of him; and he at last ordered his servant to drive back. As soon as he reached home, he set off for his daughter's house.

Paul had remained seated on the rock. Abel was a little below him, looking wistfully and eagerly at him, as if his very life depended upon each look and motion of Paul's. For a long time, there was no more movement or change of expression, than if he had been a statue cut out of the rock he sat on. But as the time drew near, the heavy, settled gloom broke slowly up, and troubled and fearful thoughts began to stir themselves in his mind. Abel saw sudden tremblings pass over his frame, and a twitching of the muscles of the face. As the huge, mysterious shadows of evening gathered round him, he looked hastily about, and there were sudden flashings of the eye. He muttered something, as if the shadows had been spirits come to warn and watch him to his work. Abel looked on with clasped hands, as if praying it might not be, till he became so weak that he could hardly

up his seat. "They are on him now," cried
 el to himself. "O, how they torture him!
 d they are coming—I feel them coming—they
 seizing me!"—A cold sweat ran over his
 ly.

The twilight died away. For a while Paul
 came motionless again, and seemed lost in
 ight; till leaping suddenly to the ground, with
 eye cagerly fixed, grasping the knife and
 ing out, "On! on! I'll follow you!" he
 hed swiftly forward.—"Stay! stay!" shriek-
 Abel, darting after him, and seizing upon the
 rts of his coat. Paul ran on, till he dragged
 el to the earth, and his hold loosened. He
 ned, and saw the poor boy stretched on the
 und.—"Stop, let me go with you," gasped
 : Abel, "do not murder—murder them!"

"Murder? The deed's yours—Theirs. They
 o set you on to curse me—all do it.—'Tis
 e! One hell swallows up all!" he screamed,
 urning Abel from him, and rushing on again.
 his was too much for Abel's weakened reason.
 o believe he had been used as the eternal curse
 the man who had been kind to him and
 urished him, when no one else would so much
 look on him, and to be thrown off at last by

him, too! He sprang from the ground, he leaped, he danced, he shouted, and ran in, mad, amongst the rocks.

When Mr. Waring reached the house, he found his daughter lying in a state of mind but faintly conscious of what had passed. He took her hand and called her by name. She looked up at him surprised.—“I thought, you had gone, Sir. Why are you here?” she asked eagerly, and getting up. “Is he found, is he mad—dead?”

“We have discovered nothing; but I was unwilling to leave you.”

“Then you would not leave me; yet he could—he could leave me—break my heart, and leave me to die alone, all alone.—Do not blame me, Paul; I meant nothing. I know, mortal cannot tell or think how much you love me.—Come, let me part back your hair; I must smooth that brow, too. There! there! Now you look as you do when you call me your own Esther.”

“My child, my daughter,” said her father, taking her hand again, “try to recollect yourself.”

“I do now,” she said; “but my mind wanders strangely. O, my father, he had a soul so large!

when wild thoughts, I know what they were, did not possess it, it was all so full of love for me! They fired his brain, and he's gone away to die, none know where, and I cannot find him.—But I, too, shall die soon; and then I shall meet him where there's no more trouble," she sobbed out, as she fell on her father's neck, and he supported her in his arms.

At this instant Paul reached one of the windows, the blinds of which were shut. There was a dim light in the room. He had heard that the father had gone on his journey; and not long before, Abel had seen Frank go into the house. He could just perceive his wife hanging round some one's neck, and the man's arm round her waist. At the sight, he gave a shout of demoniac triumph, and ran from the window. And as it was, Esther was too much lost in her wretchedness to hear it. Her father was alarmed; and without telling her what he had heard he suspected, advised her to rest awhile, and then went out with the servants. They returned disappointed. He told Esther he would not leave the house that night, as she was not well. At a late hour, all being still abroad, they retired to rest; and Esther, worn with her distress, soon fell into a deep sleep.

Paul drew near the house once more, and watched till the last light was put out.—“The innocent and guilty both sleep, all but Paul. Not even the grave will be a resting place for me. They hunt and drive me to the deed; and when 'tis done, will snatch the abhorred soul to fires and tortures. Why should I rest more? Tho' bosom I slept sweetly on—blissful dreams stealing over me—the bosom that to my delighted soul seemed all fond and faithful—why, what harboured in it? Lust and deceit, and sly, plotting thoughts, showing love where they most loathed. They stung me,—ay, in my sleep, crept out upon me, and stung me to madness—poisoned my very soul—hot, burning poisons!—Peace, peace, your promptings, Ye that put me to this deed,—drive me not mad! Am I not about it?”

He walked up cautiously to the door, and taking a key from his pocket, unlocked it, and went in. There was now a suspense of all feeling in him. He entered the parlour. His wife's shawl was hanging on the back of a chair; books in which he had read to her were lying on the table, and her work-table, near it, open. His eye passed over them, but

re was no emotion. He left the room, and ended the stairs with a slow, soft step, steal-through his own house cautiously as a thief. unlocked the door of his dressing-room, and sed on without noticing any part of it. His id shook as he partly opened his wife's chamber. He listened—all was still. He cast eye round, then entered and shut the door r him. He walked up to her bed without aining his eyes towards it, and seated himself vn upon it, beside her. Then it was he dared look on her, as she lay in all her beauty, upt in a sleep so gentle he could not hear her athing. She looked as if an angel talked h her in her dreams. Her dark, glossy hair l fallen over her bright, fair neck and bosom, l the moonlight, striking through it, penciled n beautiful thready shadows on her.

Paul sat for a while with folded arms, looking vn on her. His eye moved not, and in his k face was the unchanging hardness of stone. s mind appeared elsewhere. There was no ger feeling in him. He seemed waiting the nmand of some stern power. The order at t came. He laid his hand upon her heart, l felt its regular beat; then drew the knife

from his bosom. Once more he laid his hand upon her heart; then put the point there. He pressed his eyes close with one hand, and the knife sunk to the handle. There was one convulsive start, and a low groan. He looked on her. A slight flutter passed over her frame, and her filmy eyes opened on him once; but he seemed as senseless as the body that lay before him. The moon shone fully on the corpse, and on him that sat by it, and the silent night went on. By and by up came the sun in the hot flushed sky, and sent his rays over them. Paul moved not, nor heeded the change—there was no noise, nor motion—there were they two together like two of the dead.

At last Esther's attendant entered suddenly, and saw the gloomy figure of Paul before her. She ran out with a cry of terror; and in a moment the room was filled with servants. The old man came in, trembling and weak; no tear came from him, nor a groan. He bowed his head, as saying, it is done.

The alarm was given, and Frank, with the neighbours, went up to the chamber. Though the room was nearly full, not a sound was heard. The stillness seemed to spread from Paul and

the dead, like a spirit, over all them. Frank and some others came near him, and stood before him ; but he continued looking on his wife, as he sat with his crossed hands resting on his thigh ; while the one which had done the murder, still held the bloody knife.

No one moved. At last they looked at each other, and one of them took Paul by the wrist. He turned his slow, heavy eye on them, as if asking who they were, and what had happened. They instinctively shrunk back, letting go their hold, and his arm fell like a dead man's.

There was a movement near the door ; and presently Abel stood directly before Paul, his hands drawn between his knees, his body distorted and seeming to writhe with pain, the muscles of his face hard and twisted, and his features pinched, cold, and blue. There was a gleam and glitter, and something of a laugh, and anguish, too, in his crazed eye, as it flitted back and forth from Esther to Paul. At last Paul glanced upon him. At the sight of Abel he gave a shuddering start that shook the room. He looked once more on his wife ; his hair rose up, and eyes became wild.—“ Esther ! ” he gasped out, tossing up his arms as he threw himself

forward. He struck the bed, and fell to the floor. Abel looked, and saw his face black with the rush of blood to the head. He gave a leap that made him nearly touch the ceiling; and with a deafening, sharp shriek that rung through the house, darted out of the room, and at one spring reached the outer door.

They felt of Paul.—Life had left him.

Frank took the Father from the room. Preparations were hastily made; and about the close of day, Esther's body, followed by a few neighbours and friends, was carried to the grave. The grave-yard was not far from the foot of the stony ridge. As they drew near it, the sun was just going down, and the sky clear, and of a bright, warm glow. Presently a figure was seen running and darting in crossing movements along the top of the ridge, leaping from point to point, more like a creature of the air than of earth, for it hardly seemed to touch on any thing. It was mad Abel. So swift and shooting were his motions, and so quickly did he leap and dance to and fro, that it appeared to the dazzled eye as if hundreds of fiends were holding their hellish revels in the air. And now and then a wild laugh reached the mourners that seemed to

come out from the still sky. When it was night, the men who had made Paul's grave a little without the consecrated ground, came to the house, and taking up the body, moved off towards the place in which they were to lay it.—No bell tolled for the departed; no one followed to mourn over him as he was laid in the ground away from man, or to hear the earth fall on his coffin—that sound which makes us feel as if our living bodies were turning into dust.

It had been a chilly night; and while the frost was yet heavy on the grass, some of the neighbours went to wonder and moralize over Paul's grave. There appeared something singular upon it. They ventured timidly on, and found lying across it, poor Abel. He was apparently dead; and some of the boldest took hold of him. He opened his eyes a little, and uttered a faint, weak cry. They dropped their hold; his limbs quivered and stretched out rigid—then relaxed. His breath came once broken and quick—it was his last.

THE WEST WIND.

By W. C. B.

**BENEATH the forest skirts I rest,
Whose branching pines rise dark and high,
And hear the breezes of the West
Among the threaded foliage sigh.**

**Sweet Zephyr ! why that sound of woe ?
Is not thy home among the flowers ?
Do not the bright June roses blow,
To meet thy kiss at morning hours ?**

**And lo, thy glorious realm outspread !
Yon stretching valleys green and gay,
And yon free hill-tops, o'er whose head
The loose white clouds are borne away.**

**And there the full broad river runs,
And many a fount wells fresh and sweet,
To cool thee, when the mid-day suns
Have made thee faint beneath their heat.**

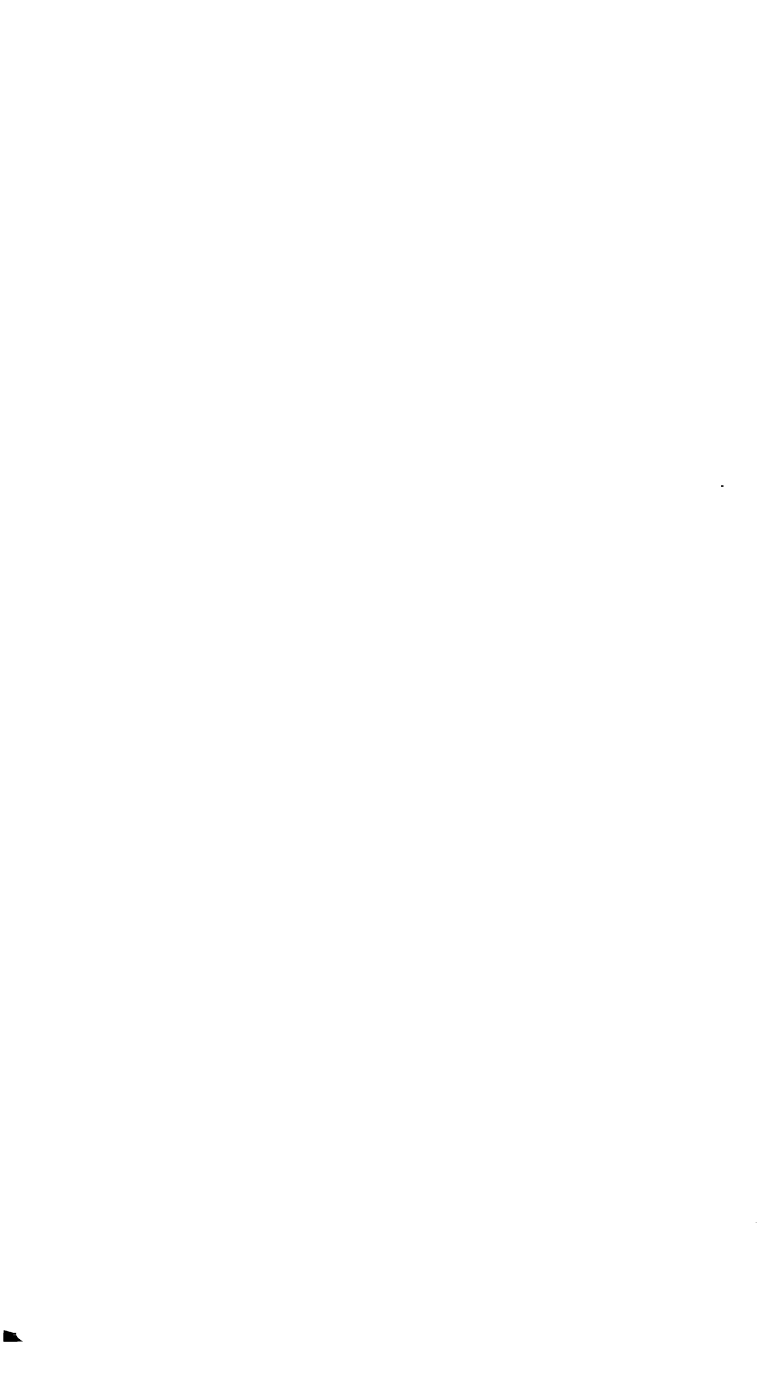
**Thou wind of joy and youth and love !
Spirit of the new wakened year ;
The sun, in his blue realm above,
Smooths a bright path when thou art here.**

In lawns the murmuring bee is heard,
The wooing ringdove in the shade ;
On thy soft breath the new-fledged bird
Takes wing, half happy, half afraid.

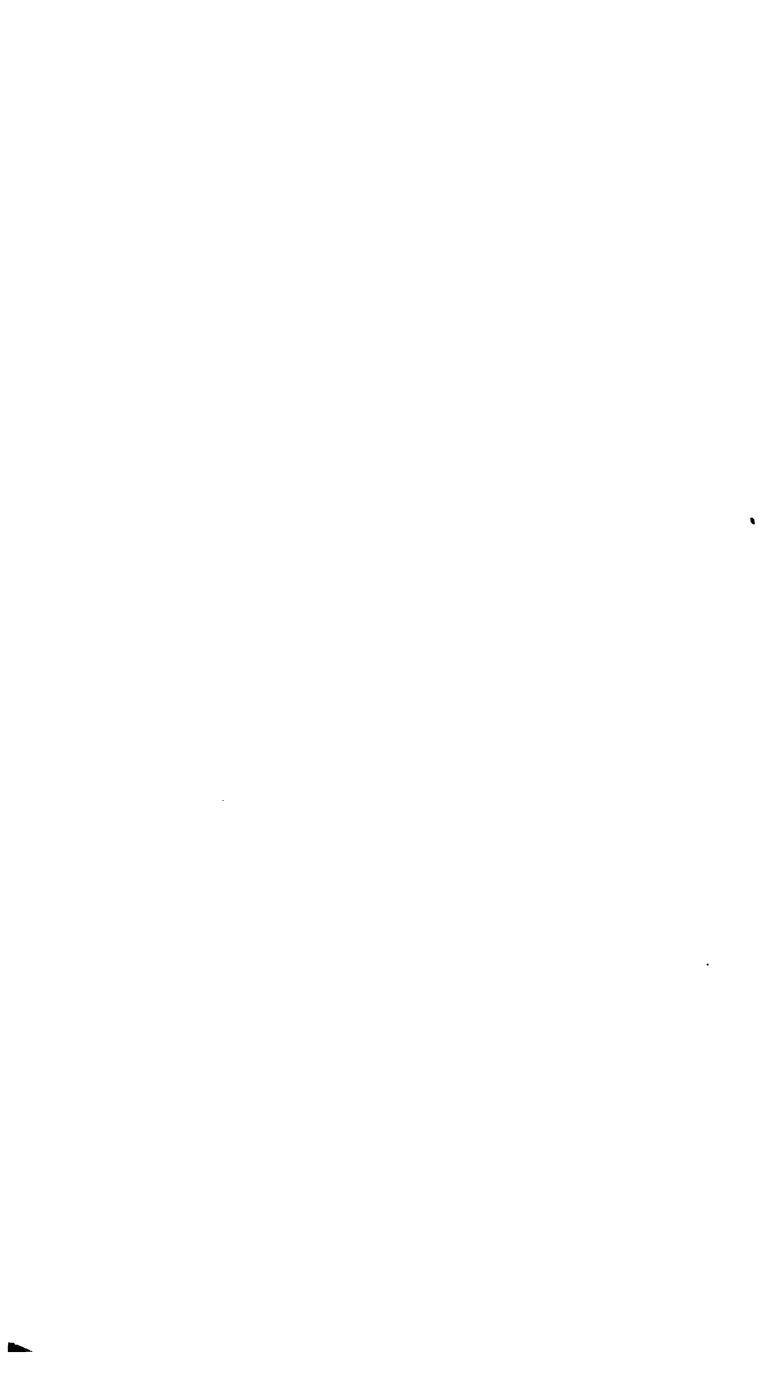
Ah, thou art like our wayward race ;—
When not a shade of pain or ill
Dims the bright smiles of nature's face,
Thou lov'st to sigh and murmur still.

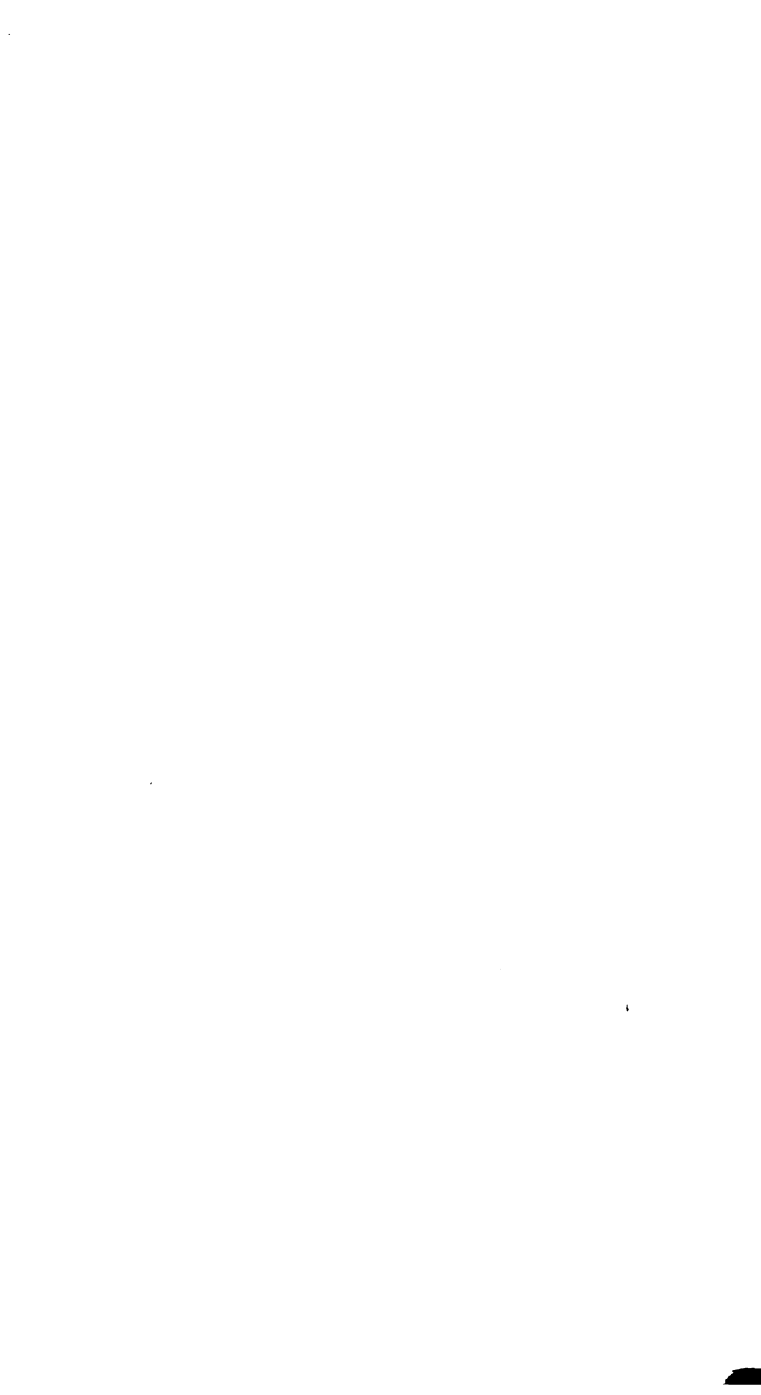
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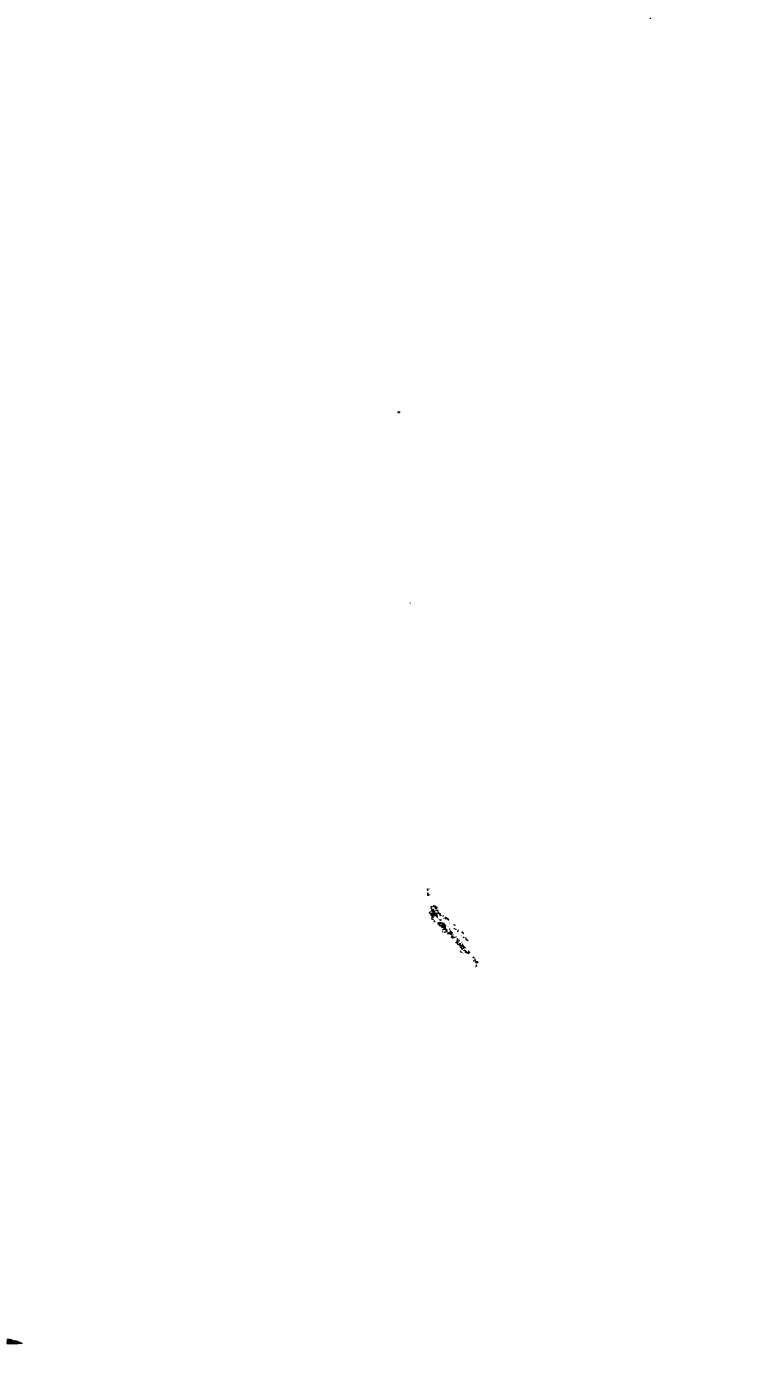


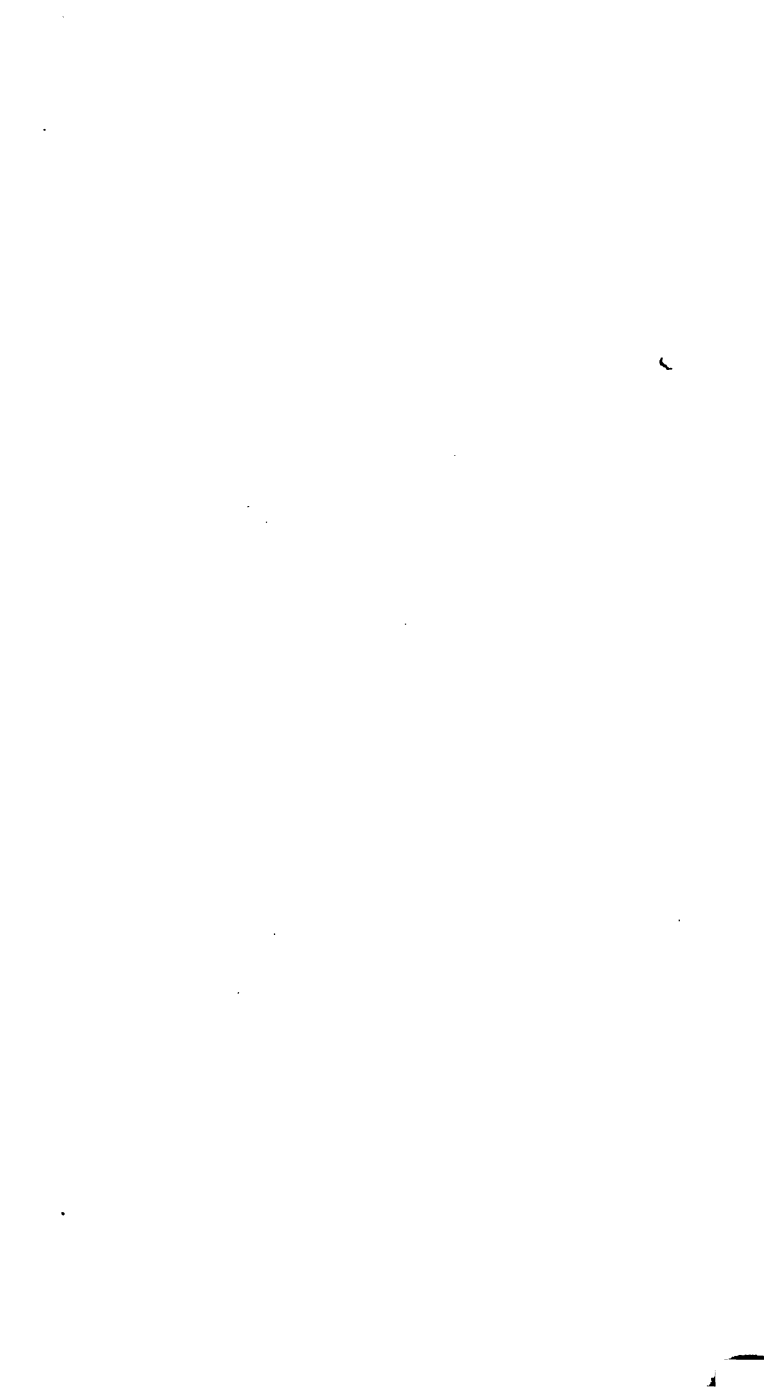














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